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ABSTRACT

Designed as a reference tool for use at state and local levels by administrators, teachers, and parent groups, the document consolidates research on special education, school and classroom effectiveness, and other indicators of effectiveness and quality into a consistent format. Introductory material orients users, and contextual factors (demographics, fiscal resources, and characteristics of the student population) are noted. The body of the document is divided into six areas: (1) philosophy, policies, and procedures; (2) resource allocation; (3) staffing and leadership; (4) parent participation and community and interagency involvement; (5) instruction; and (6) program and student outcomes. Each area contains statements indicative of effective special and regular education programs. For example, the area of staffing and leadership is divided into three sections: staff characteristics, attitudes, and relationships; staff development; and program and instructional leadership. The section on staff development begins with a stated rationale followed by 18 indicator statements (e.g., "Inservice plans are developed collaboratively by inservice clients, providers, and relevant constituencies"). Sources for the indicators are listed at the end of each section, and a full bibliography is provided in the appendix. A final section describes intended uses and outlines the developmental history of the document. (JW)

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Effectiveness Indicators For Special Education

A REFERENCE TOOL

Developed by:
THE NATIONAL RRC PANEL ON INDICATORS
OF EFFECTIVENESS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

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INVITATION TO USERS

PREFACE

The formation of the National Regional Resource Center (RRC) Panel on Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education reflects the historical and developmental context of the special education field. Since PL 94-142 was passed, implementing special education mandates has required rapid, extensive, and complex change in all sectors of the educational establishment – all within a growing climate of fiscal restraint that has affected public education significantly. While enforcing state and federal special education mandates has resulted in improvements in the quantity and adequacy of services for students with disabilities, parents and educators have increasingly recognized the need to examine the effectiveness of special education programs, and to understand the impact they have on the lives of the children in their charge.

Responding to this need, the past few years have seen many State Education Agencies (SEAs) develop statements evaluating the kinds of criteria useful for assessing both effectiveness and compliance factors in special education programs. The National RRC Panel project grew out of concerns shared by RRC representatives about the amount of effort states were spending to establish similar evaluative indicators for special education yet without any consistant or coherent framework for conducting the evaluations. While this document focuses on special education, the Panel made a special effort to incorporate and integrate findings relevant also to regular education, so the resource would be meaningful and useful to both special and regular educators. The scope is broad, reflecting special education and independent living literature as well as findings that have emerged through school improvement efforts and effectiveness research in regular education. In developing the document, more than a thousand pages of material on educational effectiveness were reviewed and coded by the Center for Resource Management according to the categorical framework agreed to by the Panel.

This reference source is the first edition of a document that will continue to evolve based on user feedback as well as future gleanings from research and practice. Because of its comprehensiveness, readers must recognize that the document represents the "ideal". Its intent is to provide users with a broad menu from which planning groups at regional, state, district, and local school levels may select priorities. Through such a process effectiveness indicators can be used to guide the examination of existing programs, to reinforce effective elements and to develop plans that improve programs and address emerging needs.

Mary Ann Lachat, Ed.D
Center for Resource Management, Inc.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education was truly a group effort. The RRC task force, which included Edith Beatty of the Northeast RRC, Robert Hoehle of the Mountain Plains RRC, Anita Pine of the Western RRC and Diane Davis of the South Atlantic RRC, guided this effort from the beginning. The task force conceptualized this reference tool, made contacts to gather state and local indicators and nominated members of the National Panel. As chairperson, I need to thank them and the other members of the panel for the countless hours spent reviewing, sharing, discussing, debating and yes, even promoting the document. Without the level of commitment shown by panel members, we could have had a rubber-stamped effort that lacked quality - or we could have had no product at all, because we lacked consensus. I am grateful to each member for agreeing to participate and even more grateful for how they participated. A list of members follows this Acknowledgement.

In addition to the contributions of the Panel, this document is the result of thousands of hours of work by people from every part of the country. Initial advice was provided to our group by Lester Horvath of A.P.T., Inc.; Robert Brinkerhoff of Western Michigan University; and Kevin Arnold of the Great Lakes RRC. Their contributions to the planning are appreciated. Special thanks go to the CASE Research Committee and especially to the Chairperson Leonard Burrello, for ongoing guidance. Another person who deserves special recognition is Ramsey Seldon of the Council of Chief State School Officers. His efforts in ensuring that the Chiefs were represented and that Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education relates also to regular education initiatives are appreciated. We also are particularly grateful to Robert T. Kennedy and the New Hampshire State Department of Education for allowing us to use their database as a starting point for this reference tool.

Through the various development stages, we have sought the advice of collaborators who reviewed drafts and commented on the utility, completeness and feasibility of our efforts. To a person they supported the work and we thank them for their constructive criticism: Thomas Bellamy, James Ysseldyke, Paul Wehman, Barbara Wilcox, Susan Hasazi, Hill Walker, and Carol Daniels.

But perhaps we are the most fortunate for having selected the Center for Resource Management, Inc. (CRM) as subcontractor on this product. Mary Ann Lachat and Cynthia Gilles of CRM, who were assisted by Connie Bergquist of Evaluation Systems Design, Inc., performed beyond our highest expectations. Kim Greene who coordinated and supervised the entire process at CRM also must be thanked for her extensive efforts. It was apparent from the beginning that they saw this effort as a professional mission, a chance to make a difference. The quality of their work, their strict adherence to timelines, their openness to criticism, and their attention to detail were outstanding. It is unlikely that any other subcontractor could have produced under our severe demands, yet the staff of CRM came through time and time again. Without their exceptional efforts, there would be no Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education.

And now we issue the reader a challenge. You hold a document that represents our best thinking to date but is far from complete. At the end of the document, "An Invitation to Users" provides you with an opportunity to tell us how it met - or didn't meet - your needs. We would appreciate your response to make future editions even more meaningful.

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INTRODUCTION

Focus on Educational Effectiveness

The development of Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education reflects a focus on educational excellence that occupied many sectors across the nation over the past several years. Peter's In Search of Excellence (1982) was followed by the publication of several reports and studies highlighting deficiencies in America's schools and making recommendations for improving them. A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), was one of the first and most influential of these reports; it was quickly followed by Action for Excellence (Education Commission of the States, 1983), Making the Grade (Twentieth Century Fund, 1983), America's Competitive Challenge: The Need for a National Response (Business-Higher Education Forum, 1983), and a variety of other studies and reports.

These reports stimulated many state and local task force efforts to first analyze school shortcomings and then recommend improvements. Many of these efforts also drew upon existing school improvement projects and the growing body of research on what characterized effective schools. Effective attributes often included: instructional leadership; a safe and orderly school environment; high expectations for student success; effective organization and delivery of instruction; and emphasis on instructional time; parent and community involvement; an emphasis on basic skills; and adequate program support, including staff development.

While the "excellence" reports provided much useful information, they had certain limitations. In most cases they described what should be done and desired outcomes, but stopped short of considering how to actually reach these goals. There were no clear definitions of quality, excellence, or effectiveness. Nor did many of the reports acknowledge the complexity of schools and districts as human organizations, and the slow pace and difficulty of getting changes implemented in the schools. Moreover, a good number of the reports focused on quantitative educational excellence, emphasizing the achievement of basic skills as measured by test performance and credit accumulation.

The excellence reports and school effectiveness studies stimulated a positive focus on educational effectiveness. Yet special educators were concerned about some of their findings. The focus on high academic achievement for example, was not balanced by consideration for students who had disabilities or might be "at risk" for a variety of reasons. The reports did not address the implicit conflict between demands for excellence and those for equity, and paid scant attention to the cultural diversity in many schools. Also neglected in many reports was the provision of effective support and instruction for students who cannot or do not achieve at the levels required of them.

Concurrent with the excellence movement, many state and local education agencies sought to move beyond a focus and strict compliance with minimum standards, toward a quest for excellence in special education. These efforts emphasized individual abilities, needs, and interests and promoted practices and conditions that would ensure equal educational opportunity and individual success. Combined with the excellence reports and school effectiveness studies, this focus on effectiveness in special education provided a compatible and balanced resource base for developing effectiveness indicators that would be relevant to both special and regular education.

Purpose and Major Audiences

Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education is meant to be a resource for all concerned audiences in their efforts to move beyond compliance to focus on the effectiveness of regular education, special education, and related services for students with disabilities. It has national implications, but its primary intent is to provide a comprehensive resource for local school districts and schools, parent and professional groups, and state education agencies. Its purposes are three-fold: to reduce redundant efforts in the future; to promote common understandings about what characterizes effective education and related services for students with disabilities; and to emphasize the integral relationship between special education and the regular education process.

Several major themes are emphasized in the document: One is the inter-relationship between regular and special education; another is the importance of active parent involvement and participation; a third is meaningful implementation of the least restrictive appropriate environment (LRE) concept; fourth comes a focus on the needs, abilities, and interests of individual students; and finally there is a broad definition of what achievements and outcomes are desirable for students with disabilities.

The indicators focus on district, school, classroom, and individual student; parent; and professional levels rather than state or national perspectives. Their scope is deliberately broad to encourage users to consider the entire educational system and the interrelationships among its elements.

Four primary audiences for the document were identified by the National RRC Panel: state education agency administrators; local education agency administrators; teacher groups; and parent groups. The focus is on special education as an integral part of the total school program, emphasizing its potential use by both regular and special education personnel. It will also prove useful to advocacy and professional groups and organizations, individuals, institutions of higher education, state advisory committees, and organizataions concerned with pre-service and in-service personnel development.

Framework and Organization of the Document

The National RRC Panel considered a number of categorical frameworks to use as the basis for organizing Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education. A draft framework was designed by panel members which was compatible with the Indicators framework developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers' (CCSSO) Center for the Coordination of Educational Assessment and Evaluation, and which incorporated categories relevant to special education. This draft was later revised and expanded, as references from both regular and special education were analyzed to create the data base on effectiveness indicators.

Throughout the development process, the importance of maintaining compatibility between the National RRC Panel framework and the CCSSO framework was emphasized; thus future communication is facilitated, relationships between special and regular education indicators are clarified, and competing and inconsistent frameworks are avoided. The fact that the frameworks do differ reflects the addition of elements specific to special education, and the varying purposes behind the two efforts. The CCSSO effort was designed to promote consensus on indicators and measurement criteria for generating quantitative data for cross-state comparisons and monitoring. Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education on the other hand, was designed to support local school and program improvement efforts. Indicators are presented as important elements to consider in program evaluation and in planning special education program improvement, not as measurable variables for quantitative comparison across schools or districts.

The indicators are organized into six major areas:

I. Philosophy, Policies and Procedures
II. Resource Allocation
III. Staffing and Leadership
IV. Parent Participation and Community and Interagency Involvement
V. Instruction
VI. Program and Student Outcomes

The framework on the next page depicts the major categories structuring the effectiveness indicators included in this document. The categories are pertinent to both special and regular education, and incorporate effectiveness categories identified in the CCSSO effort on national indicators. National RRC Panel categories which include components of the CCSSO categories are shown with an asterisk (*).

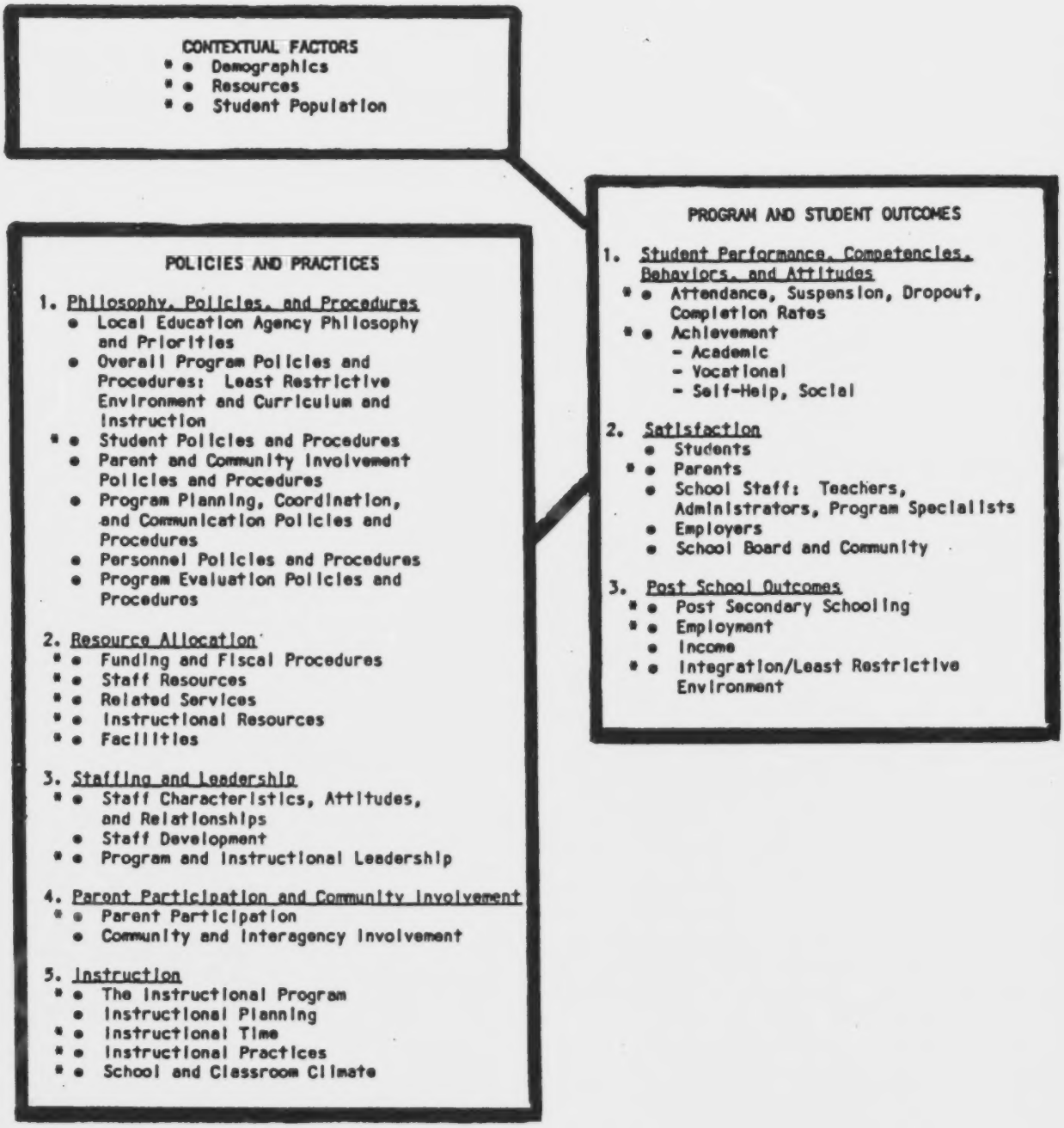
Each category of indicators within the major areas includes a rationale statement followed by a list of specific indicators. The indicator statements vary in specificity, reflecting the variation found in the literature. The various sections of the document include currently quantifiable indicators as well as qualitative indicators that were considered valuable by a majority of Panel members.

Most indicator statements can be applied to all students, highlighting commonalities among students and the need to be responsive to diversity and to considerations of fairness and equity in both regular and special education. Some statements do not apply to all students with disabilities, and are more weighted to one or two subgroups along the special education continuum, for example an emphasis on independent living and integration into the community would be particularly relevant outcome criteria for students with more severe disabilities.

NATIONAL RRC PANEL FRAMEWORK

EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

(National RRC Panel categories which include components of the CCSSO categories are shown with an asterisk*)


CONTEXTUAL FACTORS
* • Demographics
* • Resources
* • Student Population
POLICIES AND PRACTICES
1. Philosophy, Policies, and Procedures
• Local Education Agency Philosophy and Priorities
• Overall Program Policies and Procedures: Least Restrictive Environment and Curriculum and Instruction
* • Student Policies and Procedures
• Parent and Community Involvement Policies and Procedures
• Program Planning, Coordination, and Communication Policies and Procedures
• Personnel Policies and Procedures
• Program Evaluation Policies and Procedures
2. Resource Allocation
* • Funding and Fiscal Procedures
* • Staff Resources
* • Related Services
* • Instructional Resources
* • Facilities
3. Staffing and Leadership
* • Staff Characteristics, Attitudes, and Relationships
• Staff Development
* • Program and Instructional Leadership
4. Parent Participation and Community Involvement
* • Parent Participation
• Community and Interagency Involvement
5. Instruction
* • The Instructional Program
• Instructional Planning
* • Instructional Time
* • Instructional Practices
* • School and Classroom Climate
PROGRAM AND STUDENT OUTCOMES
1. Student Performance, Competencies, Behaviors, and Attitudes
* • Attendance, Suspension, Dropout, Completion Rates
* • Achievement
- Academic
- Vocational
- Self-Help, Social
2. Satisfaction
• Students
* • Parents
• School Staff: Teachers, Administrators, Program Specialists
• Employers
• School Board and Community
3. Post School Outcomes
* • Post Secondary Schooling
* • Employment
• Income
* • Integration/Least Restrictive Environment

At the end of each category, literature sources are indicated by author and date; published documents and documents produced by a state or local agency are indicated by code. A bibliography in the Appendix provides complete citations for all sources drawn from the literature, and a companion list of other sources and codes.

Contextual Factors That Influence Effectiveness

One primary goal behind Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education is to encourage program review, analysis, and improvement. The indicators provide a basis for assessing effectiveness and a structure for organizing evaluation and improvement efforts. It must be recognized, however, that schools exist within the larger context of the community, and factors in the community may have a great influence on whether the school and program achieves near their potential for effectiveness.

These contextual factors are environmental variables over which schools and school systems have little control. Yet their influence must be considered in analyzing the effectiveness of schools and programs, and in planning for improvement. Major contextual categories relate to demographics, resources, and student population.

Demographics

Demographic factors refer to the social, economic, and education levels of the community served by the school system. These variables may influence the political context of education since the school system serves different subgroups within the community that may place different values on education and take diverse positions on the allocation of resources for education. Demographic factors include such variables as:

- Geography (urban/suburban/rural)
- Size and Distribution of Population
- Education Level of Population (median years completed)
- Number of Adults With Children in the School
- Economic Level of Population (per capita income)
- Civic involvement (adults voting)
- Cultural and Language Characteristics of Population

Resources

Resources refers to the economic capacity of the community to support the educational program. Although most school systems receive federal and state dollars to finance education, many school districts rely on local tax dollars for more than 50% of the revenue available to them. Administrative support for allocating resources to special education programs may not be as strong in school districts where funds are already limited in other regular education programs.

The availability of community services and programs as resources to the school system affects instructional programs. These include resources needed to assist students during and following high school, such as adult services and programs available in the community for students with disabilities. Also, the extent to which pre-school training is available influences the demands and requirements placed on school systems at student entry levels.

Resource variables include:

- **Wealth** – per student assessed valuation
  – per capita income
  – median income
  – number of families above/below poverty level
  – state funding for special and regular education
- **Readiness** – pre-school enrollment
  – skills and training received prior to school
- **Agency Resources** – other agencies serving school-aged students
- **Post-High School Resources** – adult services and programs
  – adult education and training opportunities
  – employment opportunities

Student Population

These are the students being served by the school system. Their numbers, age levels, and characteristics in special education programs vary considerably among school districts and among states. For example, some states provide services to pre-kindergarten children, while others do not. Also, the prevalence of students with disabilities varies from district to district and from state to state.

Among the factors to be considered are:

- Size of School-Age Population
- Geographic Distribution of Students
- Cultural/Language Characteristics
- Range and Characteristics of Student Needs/ Disabilities
- Numbers of students with Various Types and Levels of Disabilities

The variables presented are merely examples of contextual factors that merit attention in school and program analysis. They serve as a reminder of the uniqueness of individual classrooms, schools, and school districts, and of the need to recognize the individual nature of local school improvement efforts.

1. PHILOSOPHY, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY PHILOSOPHY AND PRIORITIES

OVERALL PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT AND CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

STUDENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PROGRAM PLANNING, COORDINATION, AND COMMUNICATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PROGRAM EVALUATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

RATIONALE

Philosophy statements represent the beliefs of an organization. The philosophy provides a standard for the development, implementation, and evaluation of all aspects of program delivery. Through their philosophical orientation, school systems and schools generate a sense of community, with commonly shared goals and expectations for student and staff performance. It is important, therefore, that philosophical statements address equally the needs and interests of students with disabilities, and define special education as part of the educational system rather than as a separate programmatic entity. The philosophy should support the appropriate integration of special and regular education programs and encourage productive working relationships among programs.

Effective school systems have mechanisms at the district, school, and classroom levels for sustaining motivation, commitment, and identification with educational goals and priorities. It is important that student learning be perceived as the most important purpose of schooling; that district leaders and staff believe all students can learn; and that leaders and staff have a large degree of influence over student success.

INDICATORS

The district has a written philosophy of education that:

- **demonstrates the support of the School Board, district staff, and the community for the education of students with disabilities;**
- **is developed with professional and public involvement and receives public support;**
- **reflects the needs, ideals, and goals of the various cultural and economic strata within the district and commits the organization to meeting the needs of all groups;**
- **reflects the belief that all students can learn and that learning is the most important purpose of schooling;**
- **emphasizes high expectations and standards for all students, including students with disabilities;**
- **encourages the integration of students with disabilities with their non-disabled peers in all aspects of school life;**
- **emphasizes the interrelationship of special education with regular education;**

- emphasizes the ongoing improvement of instructional programs as well as periodic revision to reflect current research on learning and changes occurring in the community; and,

- reflects a commitment to the identification, implementation, and evaluation of "best practices" on a continuing basis.

The district has established policies and procedures, and has determined goals and priorities for special education that address:

- least restrictive environment for students,
- quality of special education programs/services and facilities,
- service needs of the district's students with disabilities,
- improvement of student performance,
- professional competencies of regular, special education, and related services staffs,
- parent participation/involvement,
- parent/school relationships,
- cost-effective implementation of quality program services, and
- prevention of chronic school failure.

Goals and priorities are regularly publicized within the school district and to the public.

Special education goals are understood and supported by parents, professionals and the community.

There is a district plan for implementing the written philosophy and goals of the district.

Each school's written philosophy of education expresses support for the education of students with disabilities.

School goals are developed by the entire staff as a team, are clearly understood, and reflect the consensus of the staff, parents, and community.

Goals are reviewed periodically to determine discrepancies between written priorities and actual program outcomes, and are modified as needed.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: Courter (1983), DEL, Enochs (1979), Gauthier, ID, MA-SBE, ME, NAESP (1984), NH, OH, Purkey (1983), SMA, Squires (1983), Symposium on Effective Schools (1980), VA.*

*Articles and books indicated here by author and publication date are listed in the Bibliography in the Appendix. Other source documents designated here by a code are identified in the List of Other Sources in the Appendix.

RATIONALE

Program policy is the link between philosophy and program implementation. The policy is the translation of the organization's philosophy, the needs of its constituents, and federal, state, and legal mandates into clear and concise guidelines for the operation of programs.

Students with disabilities are entitled to the same educational opportunities as students without disabilities. This belief requires policies and procedures which emphasize the placement of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.

An effective program is characterized by policies and procedures that ensure the availability of a comprehensive curriculum and continuum of services, so that students with disabilities are able to participate fully in the school program with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent possible. At the instructional level, it is important to have policies and procedures that provide clear guidelines for grouping students, maximizing instructional time, maintaining an orderly learning environment, and providing sufficient instructional resources.

INDICATORS

Overall program policies:

- **are designed to protect the rights of, and be applicable to, all individuals within the educational system;**
- **provide direction for all components of the program and are accompanied by written procedures for implementation;**
- **ensure a continuum of programs and services for students with all types of disabilities;**
- **allow opportunity for input from all interested parties;**
- **are clearly and concisely written and disseminated to all effected individuals; and,**
- **are reviewed at least annually.**

Policies and procedures that govern the design of programs:

- **minimize the labeling of students;**
- **emphasize responsiveness to student needs;**
- **emphasize least restrictive environment and movement toward independence;**

OVERALL PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

- encourage interaction among students with disabilities and non-disabled students;
- focus on desired student outcomes;
- define learning broadly to provide programs appropriate for students whose disabilities range from mild to severe;
- offer a variety of delivery models;
- allow opportunities for input from all interested parties;
- are clearly and concisely written;
- provide for an ongoing, well-designed system for evaluating the process and outcomes of programs;
- are disseminated to all interested individuals; and,
- contain a precise description of the program.

Policies and procedures emphasize the placement of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment in which they can be provided with individualized programs of special education and related services appropriate to their needs, and where they can have substantial contact with their non-disabled peers.

Policies ensure access for students with disabilities to instructional and extra-curricular activities with their non-disabled peers, and provide for adaptations and special services to support the participation of students with disabilities in all school programs and activities.

Policies ensure the availability of a full curriculum and continuum of special education and related service program options, to provide alternatives for the placement of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environments appropriate to their individual needs.

Curriculum and instruction policies and procedures encourage and ensure that all students, including students with disabilities, achieve their potential, as appropriate to individual needs and abilities, in the following areas:

- Basic skills: language, reading, writing, spelling, and mathematics,
- Science and social studies,
- Communication and social/interpersonal skills,
- Pre-vocational and vocational skills,
- Technology skills,

- Production work and study habits,
- Recreation and use of leisure time,
- Self-help and independent living attitudes, knowledge and skills,
- Positive attitudes toward self and others,
- Civic and other responsibilities,
- Art/music and creative expression, and
- Health and physical development.

Written policies and procedures provide specific guidelines regarding student grouping, the protection of instructional time, and an orderly learning environment.

The selection, development, and acquisition of instructional resources are governed by written policies and procedures that include criteria for determining the appropriateness of resources for students, as well as criteria for staff review of new materials.

Policies and procedures that govern the nature of the instructional delivery system:

- guarantee that service options are available to all students, regardless of disability, ethnic background, age (birth to 21), sex, race, residence, and socioeconomic background;
- provide for a continuum of services;
- provide specific mechanisms for ensuring least restrictive environment;
- describe desired learning environments;
- provide mechanisms for moving toward independence; and,
- provide mechanisms for entry into the community.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: CA, CEC, DEL, FL, GLARRC-DB, KY, MA, MA-SBE, McCormack (1982), ME, MO, Murphy, et al. (1982), NAESP (1984), NB, NC, NH, OH, PA, Roddy (1984), SMA, Symposium on Effective Schools (1980), VA, VT, W-B

RATIONALE

An effective special education program is supported by clear and consistent policies and procedures governing all aspects of student participation, including attendance and behavior, program eligibility, due process rights, and promotion. It is essential that policies and procedures for the identification, referral, evaluation, and placement of students are appropriate and consistent with the due process and least restrictive environment provisions of PL 94-142. To support the learning process, policies and procedures governing the instructional program ensure student participation at levels appropriate to each student's abilities, interests, and age.

INDICATORS

Student Participation

Written policies and procedures:

- specify criteria and procedures governing grading, promotion, graduation, change of placement, discipline, behavior management, suspension, and expulsion for all students, and for modification of these criteria by multi-disciplinary teams in developing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students with disabilities;
- include criteria governing student eligibility for, and exit from, special education and related services;
- include provisions for ensuring procedural safeguards; and,
- include provisions for maintaining confidentiality of records.

Written guidelines describing student rights and responsibilities are in use and are disseminated to staff members, students, and parents/guardians.

Written policies and procedures guarantee:

- a free and appropriate public education;
- access to a continuum of services/programs;
- access to comprehensive evaluation and specific entry and exit criteria as the basis for "programmatic movement" to more or less restrictive environments;
- that extensive regular education remedial intervention has been provided as appropriate prior to entry into special education;

- evaluation on an ongoing basis; and,

- that student and parent rights are explained as part of the program design.

Students are involved in the development of guidelines and policies regarding student rights and responsibilities, whenever possible.

Identification, Pre-Referral, and Referral

Written policies and procedures include:

- systematic efforts to locate, identify and refer all children/students both in school and out of school, who may be in need of special education and related services;

- procedures for routine dissemination of identification and referral procedures to parents and staff;

- staff, parent, and student roles, timelines, reasons for referral, and steps in the referral process;

- procedures for communicating initial concerns about a student's difficulties in school to parents and school staff and for exploring adjustments in the regular education program to meet the student's needs prior to referral for special education; and,

- procedures for referral by external agencies of students who may be eligible for special education and related services.

Evaluation

The district has written policies and procedures for evaluating children who may be in need of special education and related services.

Policies and procedures ensure that:

- evaluation procedures are appropriate and unbiased; i.e., they do not discriminate against exceptional persons on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, age, political practices, family or social background, sexual orientation, or disabling condition;

- a variety of evaluation methods is used to determine appropriate programming and placement including review of the student's records, observations of the student in various settings, interviews with parents and school staff, and formalized testing procedures when appropriate;

- a multi-disciplinary team approach to evaluation is used including a teacher, a special educator, parents, and as needed, an administrator and additional specialists, e.g., a physician, a psychologist, a social worker, or others; and,

- evaluations are completed in a timely fashion before major adaptations are made in a student's instructional program or placement.

Individualized Educational Program (IEP) Development

Policies and procedures for the development of appropriate Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students with disabilities specify that:

- IEP development involves those individuals who have knowledge of the student and who will be providing services to the student; i.e., parents, regular and special educators, and in some cases the student, as well as administrators and specialists, as appropriate;

- the IEP specifies student goals and objectives consistent with student needs identified during the evaluation process, educational activities leading to goal achievement, timelines for implementation, and individuals responsible for services and coordination;

- the IEP specifies evaluation criteria and methods by which the student will be evaluated, including any test/evaluation modifications needed, to determine the effectiveness of IEP implementation; and,

- modified instruction/services in the general program for students referred for possible special education services are provided throughout the referral, evaluation, and placement processes.

IEP Implementation, Program Modification, Follow-Up On Placement Decisions, and Transitions

Written policies, procedures, and guidelines governing IEP implementation and modification, and follow-up on placement decisions:

- include provisions for modifying the regular education curriculum to meet the needs of students with disabilities;

- specify provision of transportation and related services to students with disabilities when such services are needed;

- specify conditions, procedures, and safeguards for administration of medication, including reporting changes in behavior and emergencies occurring in conjunction with the administration of medication;

- provide for follow-up of students who have been referred for evaluation but are found to be not eligible for special education services;

- provide for initial placement follow-up to determine if the student is adjusting to the new placement or program adaptation; and,

- specify responsibilities and provide sufficient time for annual reviews of the individualized education programs.

The district has written procedures that:

- describe the steps and/or methods for processing student movement for the various types of transitions, including:

  - from one building level to another (i.e., elementary to middle school to high school),
  - entering/exiting programs,
  - transferring students from other special education programs,
  - other public/non-public agencies,
  - one district to another,
  - vocational programs,
  - pre-school, Head Start, and
  - graduation to post-secondary environments; and

- address the participation of agencies/persons involved in the transition, continuity of curriculum/programming and services, and transfer of information records.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: CA, CEC, DEL, GLARRC-DB, KY, MA, ME, MO, NB, NC, NH, PA, Roddy (1984), SMA, Symposium on Effective Schools (1980), VA

RATIONALE

Parent or guardian involvement and support are achieved through open and frequent communication that emphasizes a genuine partnership for decision-making. Communication includes information about disabling conditions, the need for special education early intervention, methods of accessing services, and the scope of services provided by the district. Parent involvement plans include opportunities for parents to learn about the unique needs of their child, their child's program, and how they can assist in the learning process.

Community understanding of special education programs enhances the potential for acquiring sufficient resources to support programs and services. It is important that community members are informed of program needs, and that key groups are involved in the development of program policies and plans.

INDICATORS

Parent Involvement

Written policies and procedures:

- encourage frequent home/school communication and parent/guardian involvement in school activities, and are disseminated to all parents/guardians, students, and staff members;
- encourage a working partnership involving parents and the public in school decisions about policies, procedures, and programs, and in achieving the instructional goals of the school;
- include systematic outreach to parents of students with disabilities regarding programs and services, and the training available for parents;
- provide for communication to parents of students with disabilities on their roles related to student evaluation, IEP development, implementation and evaluation, their children's progress, their rights and responsibilities, and dispute mediation;
- specify due process procedures that ensure appropriate opportunities for parents to participate in all decisions affecting their child's special education and related services, including evaluation, IEP development, implementation, and modifications during the school year or annual reviews;

- include provisions for requesting communications from parents regarding their child's needs, their perceptions of and satisfaction with their child's program, the child's behavior at home, and their expectations for the child;

- provide for the establishment of a local Special Education Advisory Committee consisting of parents representing all areas of special education, community professionals, and other interested parties; and,

- describe the committee's role and responsibilities.

Community Involvement

Policies and procedures encourage continuing community involvement and support for the special education program through provisions such as:

- maintaining an active public relations program;

- actively involving school and community groups in identifying needs, and in developing and implementing a written plan that specifies: needs, goals, objectives; strategies to involve the community in the planning and decision-making process; and, procedures for broad dissemination of the plan; and,

- informing School Board members about special education programs and services and arranging for them to visit special education classes on a regularly planned basis, at the invitation of the superintendent and principal, to view directly the implementation of their policies.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: CASE, CT, DEL, FL, MA, NASDSE (1976), NB, NH, Fried (1982), OH, Roddy (1984), Symposium on Effective Schools (1980), VA

RATIONALE

Effective school systems implement quality instructional programs through careful and consistent planning, responsive administration, and systematic communication and coordination within and across programs. Planning approaches include activities to monitor current program operation, establish program direction for the future, and detail means by which resources will be acquired. Administrative policies and procedures that govern program operation provide clear guidelines regarding ongoing communication and coordination strategies across schools and programs.

INDICATORS

Planning

Written policies and procedures provide for:

- **the development of a written long-term plan for improving special education and related services (including addition, modification, design and location of facilities), and a written annual operational plan;**
- **systematic input into and involvement in the district's long-term and annual program planning process by many groups including students, special and regular education teachers, administrators, parents, community representatives, and advocacy groups;**
- **the completion of formal and informal needs assessments to provide current data for the long-term and annual planning processes, including data on the service needs of the district's student population, as reflected in individualized education programs and related evaluations, student performance results, job placement, dropout, and graduate follow-up studies, and other evaluation results;**
- **use of long-range and annual plans for continuous policy and program development and ongoing decision-making;**
- **monitoring of the implementation status of plans and taking corrective actions when discrepancies are found; and,**
- **regular review and updating of administrative policies and procedures.**

The long-term plan includes development/improvement priorities and objectives, program tasks, responsibilities and timelines, and accountability and evaluation procedures.

Coordination and Communication

Written policies and procedures promote:

- **coordination, communication, and information sharing between special and regular education personnel;**
- **sufficient time for special education staff to maintain on-going contact with regular education teachers who have educational responsibility for students with disabilities;**
- **coordination of services between the local education agency and other agencies and organizations that serve students with disabilities; and,**
- **coordination among special, regular, and vocational education and related services personnel.**

Formally defined procedures exist:

- **for ensuring effective horizontal and vertical communication among all units in the districts; and,**
- **for communicating the results of evaluations, plans for improvement, and progress toward improvement to federal and state authorities, local constituencies, and district staff.**

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: CA, CEC, Courter (1983), DEL, FL, GLARRC-DB, MO, NB, NH, OH, Purkey (1983), Roddy (1984), Squires (1983), Symposium on Effective Schools (1980), VA

RATIONALE

Teachers and service personnel are the primary delivery agents of instructional programs, and in most school districts, more than 80% of the fiscal resources are expended on staff. School districts need clear written policies and procedures related to the employment, development, support, and supervision of all employees. Policies and procedures include such things as ongoing supervision and feedback to staff, ongoing improvement of staff skills and attitudes, and staff appraisal designed to facilitate staff growth. Opportunities for professional growth are offered regularly and are encouraged.

INDICATORS

Written employment policies and procedures:

- require that the employment and promotion of all personnel, including long-term substitute teachers, be based on verified skills, knowledge needed for the job, and the possession of appropriate qualifications, e.g., certificates, licenses and/or registrations;
- prohibit discrimination in any personnel action on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, age, political practices, family or social background, or disability;
- require that all personnel receive written job descriptions which include the duties and responsibilities of the position, and any other conditions of employment; and,
- provide for the regular dissemination of a written description of the administrative organization and levels of authority to all staff and other interested parties.

Policies and procedures for staff development:

- require systematic evaluation of needs and interests of potential participants;
- provide for coordinating staff development plans and activities with district program plans and objectives;
- support the design of staff development programs to improve the personal and professional skills, knowledge, and attitudes of all individuals, including professionals and parents, who are serving students with disabilities;

- provide for the delivery of systematic programs for parents and special and regular education personnel related to understanding and delivering educational programs and related services for children with disabilities, with a particular focus on career and vocational education, and awareness of life span planning in the least restrictive environment; and

- require that adequate instruction and supervision be provided for employees before they are required to perform activities for which they have not previously been prepared.

Policies and procedures provide for:

- employee support and assistance in completing all job duties and responsibilities;

- support and assistance to all regular (academic and vocational) and special education teachers serving students with disabilities, including assisting regular classroom teachers to work cooperatively with consulting teachers and multi-disciplinary teams to implement curricular and procedural recommendations, and to adapt classroom instruction;

- appropriate security to maintain safety of staff and students;

- direct and systematic supervision of all personnel, including those serving students with disabilities;

- annually conducting systematic and fair evaluations of all personnel, including those serving students with disabilities, based on their work with a wide range of students, and providing personnel with a written report on their performance; and,

- plans for individual staff growth included in annual evaluations in terms of goals and objectives.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: Berman (1979), CA, CASE, CEC, DEL, GLARRC-DB, Levine (1982a), Little (1981), MA, NAESP (1984), NB, NH, NIN, OH, Purkey (1983), Roddy (1984), Squires (1983), Stallings (1981a), VA

PROGRAM EVALUATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

RATIONALE

It is important to demonstrate that the special education program is providing instructionally effective programs and services that have merit and worth. Routine and systematic program evaluations provide information for making decisions on the processes and impact of programs and services provided to students with disabilities. The program evaluation process includes planning involving all concerned groups (parents, regular and special education teachers, students, district staff, school board and community), data collection, data analysis, reporting of results, and plans for taking action to implement appropriate improvement in the programs. Areas addressed through program evaluation may include student referral evaluation and placement practices, student progress and outcomes, school and classroom climate, staff behaviors and satisfaction, the organization of programs/services, resources, and instructional practices.

INDICATORS

Policies and procedures provide for:

- **conducting systematic and routine evaluations of special education and related services for students with disabilities;**
- **routinely evaluating program effectiveness in such areas as identification and referral processes, evaluation, IEP development, instructional delivery, staff behaviors and attitudes, school climate, student progress, program impact, and concurrence with regulation and statute;**
- **using evaluation results to determine whether programs are meeting the needs of students with disabilities, and to develop and improve programs;**
- **broad participation by the school community at all stages of the evaluation process (awareness, development, and use).**

Written student performance evaluation policies and procedures provide for:

- **collecting, summarizing, and using information about student progress and performance;**
- **coordinating student performance evaluations to reduce disruption of classroom instruction and duplication of effort;**

- routine review of congruency among the evaluation instruments administered, the IEP, and the instruction provided to the child to ensure appropriate alignment; and,

- evaluating the success of students with disabilities after graduation.

The district has a written policy governing agency participation in research to protect the rights and welfare of subjects participating in the research.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: Bachelor (1982), Behr (1981), CA, CEC, GLARRC-DB, Levine (1982a), MA, NB, NH, Niedermeyer (1981), Symposium on Effective Schools (1980), VA

2. RESOURCE ALLOCATION

FUNDING AND FISCAL PROCEDURES

STAFFING RESOURCES

RELATED SERVICES

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

FACILITIES

RATIONALE

Adequate funding and resources are essential to the provision of comprehensive and effective special education instructional and support services. Effective funding strategies include an investigation of all potential resources – federal, state, local, and private – as well as resource allocation that supports program improvement. Internal fiscal controls ensure accountability and facilitate decision-making.

INDICATORS

Sufficient funds and resources are allocated for the staffing, facilities, equipment, services, and instructional materials needed to implement an effective program for students with disabilities.

Resource development includes an investigation of state and federal monies as well as other funding sources, and incorporates the use of community resources, both fiscal and non-fiscal.

Budget development is based on a careful study of previous expenditures, changes in costs, projections of future enrollments, student and program needs and objectives, and include input from staff, parents, and other key sources.

The distribution of school district resources demonstrates that special education professionals share equitably with other professionals the opportunities and benefits (salary, working conditions, facilities, and other resources) of the school system.

Fiscal resources are allocated to support program improvement.

Fiscal procedures are consistent with state and federal mandates.

Financial records are maintained in a format that facilitates effective decision-making.

Fiscal management procedures exist in a written form, and ensure fiscal accountability at all levels from teachers through the superintendent.

Routine fiscal audits are conducted on programs for students with disabilities.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: Berman (1979), CEC, FL, KY, Levine (1982a), Little (1981), NB, NH, Purkey (1983), SMA, Squires (1983), Stallings (1981a), VA

RATIONALE

Effective special education programs require sufficient numbers of administrative and teaching staff and related service personnel to provide the instruction and services that meet students' needs. It is essential that staff be appropriately trained and certified, and that the allocation of staffing resources be based on staff qualifications, the characteristics of the student population to be served, and the types of assignments that enhance productivity.

INDICATORS

Teachers, administrators, supervisors, and related services personnel serving students with disabilities are appropriately qualified (certified, licensed or registered) and practice only in areas of special/regular education at age levels and in programs for which they are prepared by reason of training and experience.

The special education program has personnel trained in the various areas of exceptionality in order to provide a total array of programming.

Sufficient numbers of special education staff, related service personnel, and support personnel (para-professionals, aides, work evaluators, diversified occupational trainer teams, school nurses) are employed to implement an effective program for students with disabilities.

Sufficient numbers of administrative personnel are employed to provide support for the special education program.

Transportation personnel qualifications include appropriate licenses, first aid knowledge and training, and a knowledge of the needs of students with disabilities.

Trained and qualified substitute teachers or support personnel are provided to replace temporarily, as needed, the personnel serving students with disabilities.

Assignment of case loads to staff is equitable among staff and across program units within the district.

Staff time is scheduled to enhance staff productivity and increase student contact hours.

The allocation of staffing resources is based on staff qualifications, the characteristics of the population being served (age, nature/severity of disability), and on student/staff ratios which increase the potential for student success.

The staffing organization supports the provision of the least restrictive environment, and minimizes the need for student relocation among programs, buildings, and districts.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: CA, CASE, CEC, DEL, FL, KY, MA, ME, MO, NH, PA, SMA, VA

RATIONALE

In addition to the instructional program, many students with disabilities need additional services such as occupational or physical therapy, transportation, and counseling. An effective program provides a sufficient range and level of services to meet student needs, and these services are easily accessible to students.

INDICATORS

The district implements written policies and procedures on the provision of related services to students with disabilities.

Students with disabilities have access to appropriate related services including: speech and language therapy; physical therapy, occupational therapy and adaptive physical education; psychological services, social work services; and such other services which involve medical, vision, or hearing specialists.

Appropriate and sufficient related services are integrated into the special education program across all handicapping conditions, age/grade levels, and school locations.

Support systems provided for students and families include advocacy and counseling assistance.

Related services are delivered at the student's location, if possible. When related services must be provided outside the student's regular instructional environment, related services personnel are located in areas that are accessible to students with disabilities.

The district implements written policies and procedures on the transportation of students with disabilities, and transportation requirements are specified in the students' Individualized Education Programs, if applicable.

Transportation provided for students with disabilities:

- **is barrier-free and adaptable to students' needs;**
- **is provided with trained aides assigned to vehicles when the conditions warrant;**
- **is provided in vehicles adjusted to accommodate students' special needs, e.g., such as wheelchairs, crutches, and ages of the children being transported;**
- **is equally accessible to all students;**
- **is organized to minimize the amount of time each student spends being transported;**

- includes provisions for recreational and emergency use;
- is based on the identified needs and capabilities of students;
- includes the use of public transportation where possible;
- meets all safety regulations beyond minimal standards; and,
- is provided in regular education students transportation except in those cases where students' disabilities require modifications that cannot be made in standard transportation vehicles.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: CA, FL, KY, MA, ME, NH, PA, Roddy (1984), SMA, VA

RATIONALE

Instructional programs are dependent upon a range of materials and equipment for effective delivery. These include the textbooks, workbooks, communication and visual aids, manipulatives, laboratory equipment, filmstrips, computers, and other instructional devices commonly used in teaching students with disabilities. Effective resource planning ensures that sufficient and appropriate materials are available, are selected with staff involvement, and are maintained in good condition.

INDICATORS

The district implements written policies and procedures for the purchase, use, and repair of diagnostic and instructional materials for all students, including those with disabilities.

Instructional staff participate in the selection and use of appropriate instructional materials, equipment, supplies, and other resources needed in the effective practice of their profession.

The curriculum is supported by adequate financial and material resources. Appropriate textbooks, materials, and equipment are available for instructional planning and are maintained and used to support learning.

Materials, supplies, and equipment used with students with disabilities:

- are appropriate for each student and for the instructional content;
- are available in sufficient quantities and are accessible;
- are sufficient to take care of the personal care needs of the students; and,
- are maintained in a good state of repair.

Staff members have access to a specified annual budget to purchase instructional resources at their own discretion.

A general fund for instructional resources is available to meet critical needs as they arise during the year, e.g., new students, new classes, or new identified needs.

There is a centralized index of instructional resources referenced by author, title, subject matter, format/learning modality, age/interest/ability level, and/or producer/distributor.

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

The organization of instructional resources includes community services, programs, and personnel available to enhance the school's resources.

To ensure the availability and use of instructional resources, there is an ongoing review/evaluation of selection criteria, sufficiency, appropriateness, acquisition procedures, effectiveness, organization, and utilization.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: Behr (1981), Blumberg (1980), CEC, Cohen, S. (1982), DEL, Denham (1980), Doherty (1981), Edmonds (1979a), GLARRC-DB, Jorgenson (1977), Leithwood (1982), McGeown (1979-80), ME, NAESP (1984), NB, Neidermeyer (1981), NH, PA, Rosenshine (1983), Sarason (1971), SMA, Symposium on Effective Schools (1980), VA, Venezky (1979), Wilson (1981)

RATIONALE

The instructional program provided to students with disabilities is affected by the physical setting in which the instruction is delivered. It is essential that the school's physical plant be large enough, in good condition, and properly equipped to support the instructional program. Facilities are clean, safe, appropriate for actual use, accessible to students and staff with disabilities, regularly maintained, and provide a comfortable learning environment. The school site and building are in a good state of repair, provide adequate space, afford maximum safety, and safeguard the health of the students.

INDICATORS

District facilities are appropriate for providing services to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Classrooms are an appropriate size for the instruction being provided and the number and characteristics of students in the program, allowing for flexible grouping, varied activities, equipment, and use of aides/volunteers.

If students with disabilities require some services in a special classroom, the classrooms are comparable in size, condition, and placement to regular education classrooms.

Special classrooms are located within the regular school setting and not in isolated sections of the school or separate from the school.

Classrooms are adequately lighted, heated, and ventilated.

School facilities are safe and free of hazards, with periodic health and safety inspections.

School facilities are barrier-free regarding both access and egress, are designed to provide a least restrictive environment, and address such needs as:

- **parking lots to accommodate special vehicles and delivery of students,**
- **accessible/adaptive bathrooms,**
- **accessible/adaptive drinking fountains,**
- **elevators, if not a single story building,**
- **support rails,**
- **ramps to accommodate wheel chairs, and**
- **meet all safety requirements as required by Section 504 Regulations.**

FACILITIES

Special education staff are involved in the assignment of work spaces (classrooms, offices, clinical areas).

Instructional areas are appropriately furnished and equipped to meet the needs of students being served, and have sufficient storage and display space.

Adequate indoor and outdoor facilities for physical education are provided.

Adequate space and accommodations are available for use by related services personnel when services must be provided outside of the student's usual instructional environment.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: CEC, GLARRC-DB, ME, NH, PA, SMA, Symposium on Effective Schools (1980)

3. STAFFING AND LEADERSHIP

STAFF CHARACTERISTICS, ATTITUDES, AND RELATIONSHIPS

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

RATIONALE

The qualifications and attitudes of teachers, administrators, and service personnel strongly influence program effectiveness. In effective schools, staff are well trained, appropriately certified, and communicate student performance standards that are both challenging and attainable. Staff believe in their ability and responsibility to deliver effective instructional programs and demonstrate caring for students. They are enthusiastic about the teaching/learning process. They actively participate in the planning and development of regular and special education programs, share information on student needs and progress, and value working as a team.

INDICATORS

Qualifications, Expectations, and Participation

Staff who provide services to students with disabilities are qualified, well trained, and appropriately certified, licensed, or registered.

Throughout the educational experience of all students, there is a consistent and positive emphasis on success.

Teachers, administrators, and support staff have high and realistic achievement expectations for students in special education and regular education programs.

Within the limitations of specific disabilities, teachers expect each student to learn and achieve to the best of his/her ability in each educational activity.

Achievement standards are set so that they are both challenging and attainable.

Staff and parents emphasize the importance of learning, and all students are expected to work hard toward the attainment of priority learning goals.

Staff have high expectations for themselves. They believe that they have the capacity as well as the responsibility to deliver effective instructional programs.

Regular, special, and vocational education teachers, related services personnel, and para-professionals provide instruction and related services as specified in each student's IEP and assist students to achieve their goals and objectives.

District staff regard special education services as an important part of the school program. Administrators and teachers demonstrate positive attitudes toward students with disabilities and are dedicated to helping these students fit in with non-disabled students.

STAFF CHARACTERISTICS ATTITUDES, AND RELATIONSHIPS

Regular, special, and vocational education staff members demonstrate caring for students by their alert responsiveness to the self-help, peer, school, classroom and home adjustments of individual students. Students may approach staff members to discuss a variety of concerns.

Special, regular, and vocational education teachers are enthusiastic about the teaching and learning processes and have a high sense of efficacy – they believe that they are effective and can affect the learning of each student.

Regular, special, and vocational education teachers and related services personnel:

- **regularly participate in staff development activities such as in-service training, professional meetings, and review of professional literature, to upgrade their knowledge and skills;**
- **actively participate in the planning and development of special education and related services programs; and,**
- **assess the needs of students in their particular program areas and make professionally-based recommendations and appropriate contributions to the development and coordination of the district's long-term and annual program plans.**

Special education personnel:

- **are thoroughly familiar with state laws and regulations regarding special education and student records;**
- **understand skill development and the importance of learning one step at a time (sequential);**
- **strive to develop positive attitudes among other professionals toward exceptional persons; and,**
- **serve as advocates for exceptional persons by speaking, writing, and acting in a variety of situations on their behalf; continually seeking to improve government provisions for the education of exceptional persons; and, working cooperatively with other professionals, to improve the provision of special education and related services to exceptional persons with disabilities.**

School staff initiate, support, or participate in research related to the education of students with disabilities, with the aim of improving the quality of educational services, increasing the accountability of programs, and generally benefiting persons with disabilities.

Relationships and Teaming

Regular education (academic and vocational), special education, and related services staff relate well to each other; they:

- **see themselves as part of a team and value working as a team in planning and implementing IEPs;**
- **communicate and plan together often and productively to ensure program coordination;**
- **share information on student needs and progress among staff members currently working with the student, and with staff who will be working with the student in the future; and,**
- **work together to adjust lessons and programs as needed.**

Multi-disciplinary team meetings reflect good communication and partnerships among all members (specialists, classroom teachers, parents, administrators, and any other participants) and effectively coordinate IEP development processes.

Cooperative efforts between regular and special education staff are directed toward increasing the opportunities for integrating students with disabilities in regular school programs.

Special education and related services staff, multi-disciplinary teams, and other resource personnel provide support, consultation, coordination, and technical assistance:

- **to regular (academic and vocational) teachers related to modifying instruction and materials to promote the successful performance of students with disabilities in regular classrooms; and,**
- **to other school staff, parents and the community to facilitate the learning and development of students.**

Services are available for parents and teachers to assist them in solving student discipline and behavior management difficulties.

Special education staff understand and respond to the realities of regular education teachers' situations.

Regular education staff are supportive and willing to work with students with disabilities and special education staff to help with successful instruction in regular classrooms.

STAFF CHARACTERISTICS ATTITUDES, AND RELATIONSHIPS

Staff members who are knowledgeable in computer technology help special educators provide computer-assisted instruction of students with disabilities.

Administrators, teachers and specialists avail themselves of appropriate professional consultation concerning any phase in the development and implementation of students' Individual Education Programs.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: Bachelor (1982), Behr (1981), Berliner (1979), Berman (1979), Block (1976), Bloom (1974), Bloom (1976), Brookover (1979a and b), Brundage (1979), CA, CEC, CN, Cohen (1981), DEL, Edmonds (1979a and c), Evertson (1980), Evertson (1982a), FL, GLARRC-DB, Good (1979c), KY, Levine (1982a), Little (1981), Little (1982), Lohman (1982), Madden (1976), MA-SBE, McCormack (1982), ME, Medley (1979), Milazzo (1982), MO, NAESP (1984), NASDSE (1976), NH, Odden (1982), OH, Olsen, PA, PDK (1980), Purkey (1983), Roddy (1984), Rosenshine (1981), Rutter (1979), Rutter, et al. (1979), Squires (1983), Stallings (1981a), Symposium on Effective Schools (1980), VA, Weber (1971), Wells (1978), Wynne (1980)

RATIONALE

Staff development is a commitment to help individuals grow personally and professionally in a supportive environment. It involves a broad range of activities designed to promote staff renewal and enhance student learning. Teacher openness to staff development is related directly to a commitment to program improvement. In effective schools, staff development needs are assessed regularly, in-service plans are developed collaboratively by staff, and sufficient time and resources are provided for in-service training.

Staff development opportunities incorporate the findings of effective school research, and training is provided for regular and special education staff and related services personnel regarding successful and appropriate programs and approaches for students with disabilities. Incentives are provided to encourage participation in staff development, and in-service programs are evaluated to determine the extent to which staff needs and interests have been met.

INDICATORS

The district develops and implements a plan for on-going staff development for all school staff to increase awareness, knowledge, and skills, and to foster positive attitudes.

District and building administrators explicitly support in-service programs.

Sufficient time and other resources are provided for in-service training of all personnel responsible for special education programming – special and regular education teachers and administrators, parents, volunteers, and related services personnel.

Staff development needs of school staff, parents, and volunteers are assessed regularly, and in-service programs are planned in response to assessed needs, interests, and strengths of participants.

In-service plans are developed collaboratively by in-service clients, providers, and relevant constituencies.

Staff development programs incorporate knowledge of adult learning. They are relevant to actual responsibilities and emphasize skill building. In-service activities are related to and build on each other.

The district ensures, through staff development, that all local educators understand the findings and implications of research on effective schools.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Special and regular education staff are informed of:

- identification services,
- diagnostic services,
- IEP development and placement services,
- instructional and related services,
- annual program review services,
- the special education curricula,
- parent and student rights, and
- community resources.

Regular and special education teachers receive in-service training:

- in communicating with and working with parents, and in ways of reaching "hard to reach" parents;

- to assist in the integration of students with disabilities into regular classrooms;

- on methods and materials that are effective with the types of students they work with;

- that includes the demonstration and practice of effective teaching skills;

- in performing necessary support services (feeding, toileting, and cleaning) appropriate to the needs of their students; and,

- on the use of adaptive equipment and educational technology.

Staff development is provided for principals to: create strong two-way ties between the district office and individual schools; ensure that principals have leadership skills for long-term planning; and, increase their awareness of special education needs.

In-service training regarding life span planning for persons with disabilities is provided for parents and educational personnel.

In-service training is provided for regular (academic and vocational) and special education staff related to appropriate educational programs for students with disabilities, including curriculum modification, job training, placement, and follow-up.

Aides and assistants receive orientation and in-depth in-service training on the nature and management of students with disabilities.

Transportation personnel are provided with in-service training related to the characteristics, needs, and management skills necessary to provide safe transportation for students with disabilities.

The district provides staff with incentives such as release time to encourage participation in staff development programs, professional meetings, and other professional activities; disincentives such as inconvenient times or locations are avoided.

Supervision and evaluation procedures are written and are intended to help teachers set and work toward professional growth goals. All staff receive periodic feedback on performance. Classroom observations are made according to guidelines developed in advance; feedback is provided quickly; emphasis is on improving instruction and boosting student achievement.

The district evaluates the extent to which the staff development program meets staff needs and increases proficiency in providing effective special education programs including instruction, related services, supervision and administration.

The evaluation of in-service is a collaborative venture whose primary purpose is to assist with planning and implementing programs.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: Austin (1979), Brookover (1979a), CA, CCSSO, CEC, CO, Cotton (1980), DEL, Dornbush (1975), Duke (1982), Edmonds (1979a), FL, GLARRC-DB, Gross (1965), ID, Leithwood (1978), Lipham (1980), MA, Madden (1976), ME, Michigan SDE (1974), MO, NAESP (1984), NASDSE (1976), NH, NIN, OH, Olsen, Roddy (1984), Rosenblum (n.d.), SMA, Symposium on Effective Schools (1980), Wellisch (1978)

RATIONALE

Effective schools research cites strong leadership at the district and school levels as the most consistent characteristic of outstanding school programs. Regular and special education administrators clearly communicate goals, priorities, and expectations to staff, parents, students, and the community; emphasize the importance of value of achievement; and establish systems of incentives and rewards to encourage excellence in student, teacher, and administrator performance. They establish and maintain a supportive and orderly environment, acquire necessary resources to ensure effective programs, model effective teaching practices, monitor student progress, and actively involve staff and parents in program planning, development, and improvement efforts.

INDICATORS

Regular and special education administrators provide strong and effective leadership.

Instructional Leaders:

- **portray the importance of learning and emphasize the value of achievement;**
- **clearly communicate educational philosophy, goals, priorities, and expectations to staff, parents, students, and the community;**
- **establish instructional norms that unify staff and motivate people to accomplish the school's mission;**
- **believe that all students can learn and that the school makes the difference between success and failure;**
- **direct instruction, set clear expectations and standards for quality curriculum and instruction, and evaluate teachers and themselves by those standards;**
- **know and can apply teaching and learning principles; are knowledgeable of research, and foster its use in problem solving; model effective teaching practices for staff as appropriate;**
- **establish curriculum priorities and monitor curriculum implementation;**
- **protect learning time from disruption; establish, communicate, and enforce time use priorities;**
- **establish and maintain a supportive and orderly environment;**

- acquire resources needed to ensure the effectiveness of instructional programs from many sources, including the community;

- establish systems of incentives and rewards to encourage excellence in student, teacher, and administrator performance;

- recognize staff and parents for the development of exemplary programs and quality instructional materials;

- monitor student progress frequently to stimulate achievement;

- establish standard procedures to guide parent involvement, emphasizing the importance of parental support of the school's instructional efforts;

- support efforts of special and regular education staff to improve through staff development and training opportunities;

- involve students, teachers, parents, and administrators in developing and implementing plans for program development, modification, and improvement; and,

- expect instructional programs to improve over time -- improvement strategies are organized and systematic and are given high priority and visibility.

Superintendents and principals agree on the importance of special education and show support for programs and for all staff serving students with disabilities.

Principals:

- assume responsibility for ensuring the effectiveness of special education programs in their schools and take part in special education planning and program development activities; and,

- are directly responsible for supervising the IEP process in their schools.

Principals and Special Education Administrators:

- share responsibility for instructional leadership in special education programs;

- emphasize the improvement of instruction and student performance through on-going staff supervision, observation, and consultation;

- provide sufficient time for all personnel who play a role in special education programming to communicate and consult with each other;

- provide enough time for all personnel who play a role in special education programming to complete their assigned responsibilities and duties without detracting from direct student instruction;

- schedule adequate staff time for non-instructional special education activities, e.g., IEP meetings; and,

- schedule time for on-going modification of curriculum by groups of teachers.

Special Education Administrators*:

- develop and maintain a knowledge base of regular education assessment, curriculum, and instruction and anticipate their potential impact on special education;

- consider state, local, and federal laws, regulations, policies, procedures, and priorities in developing district policies, procedures, and plans;

- exercise judgement and skill in interpreting policy or in making decisions in areas where a lack of policy exists;

- use uniform special education policies and procedures throughout the district/school and communicate them to teachers, parents, other administrators, school board members, and students;

- create a climate of shared decision-making involving students, teachers, principals, parents, and school boards in developing special education policies, procedures, and plans, and in solving problems;

- develop and maintain strong professional relationships with regular education administrators and school boards;

- keep district personnel, school board members, parents and the community informed about special education policies, programs and procedures, new developments, and legal requirements;

*e.g., local directors of special education and directors of educational collaboratives/cooperatives.

- make consistent, personal contact with building administrators and staff, and communicate an attitude and sense of direction that allows staff to develop a sense of worth and pride in their work;

- work closely with and provide support for local Advisory Committees for Special Education;

- are skillful in resolving and managing conflict and reacting quickly and positively to suggestions and criticisms from other departments within the educational organization;

- effectively coordinate district special education and related services programs, including administration, supervision, compliance with laws and regulations, parent and community relationships, out-of-district contacts, regular education and special education program articulation, program and curriculum development, improvement and evaluation, and staff development and evaluation;

- ensure that administrative lines of authority and responsibility affecting special education services are specific and familiar to all district staff;

- provide appropriate guidelines, consultation, and coordinative support to facilitate the IEP process district-wide;

- develop budgets sufficient to carry out an effective special education program, allocate district special education funds (local, state, and federal) appropriately, and obtain additional funds to support innovative programming;

- ensure that adequate personnel, facilities, materials, and supplies are available to support effective special education programs;

- encourage the participation of students with disabilities in all school programs and activities;

- provide specific and relevant job descriptions for all special education staff;

- orient new staff regarding the philosophy, goals, priorities, and programming procedures for special education, and each employee's responsibilities within the district;

- regularly observe regular and special education staff, make helpful suggestions, and point out effective teaching;

- consult with building principals concerning the assignment and supervision of special education teachers;

- consult with building principals concerning the systematic observation and evaluation of regular and special education teachers and para-professionals who work with students with disabilities regarding their:

  . practical knowledge of disabling conditions,
  . instructional expertise and content knowledge,
  . ability to engage children in effective learning experiences, and
  . efforts to improve their programs;

- provide time to special education personnel for on-going communication and consultation with regular education teachers responsible for teaching students with disabilities;

- manage the assessment and analysis of special education and related service needs of district students;

- coordinate the development and implementation of annual and long-term plans for program improvement;

- negotiate and gain support from key personnel on program proposals;

- act as models, facilitators, and catalysts for staff on program development activities; and,

- understand the power structure in the organization, and gain support to facilitate the approval of proposals and ideas that benefit special education.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: Berman (1979), Blumberg (1980), Bossert (1982), Brookover (1979b), Brundage (1979), CASE, CCSSO, CEC, Clark (1980), CN, CO, Crandall (1982), DEL, Duke (1982), Edmonds (1979a), Emrick (1977), Enochs (1979), FL, GLARRC-DB, Hall (1980), Hargrove (1981), ID, I-P, KY, Leithwood (1982), Lipham (1981), Little (1981), Little (1982), Madden (1976), MA-SBE, ME, MO, NAESP (1984), NASDSE (1976), NB, New York SDE (1974), NH, OH, Olsen, PA, Purkey (1983), SMA, Stallings (1981b), Symposium on Effective Schools (1980), VA, Venezky (1979), VT, Weber (1971), Wellisch (1978)

4. PARENT PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY AND INTERAGENCY INVOLVEMENT

PARENT PARTICIPATION

COMMUNITY AND INTERAGENCY INVOLVEMENT

RATIONALE

In both regular and special education, it is important that school staff seek the participation of parents and ensure that parents are informed and understand the variety of ways they can be involved in their children's education. Parent participation is enhanced by communication approaches that seek to develop school-parent relationships based on mutual respect, provide clear and pertinent information, involve parents as instructional partners, seek parent input, and provide frequent information on student progress. Students benefit when school staff encourage working partnerships between parents and the school regarding school decisions, and collaborate with parents to benefit students.

INDICATORS

To achieve effective two-way communication and collaboration with parents, school staff:

- **distribute to all parents, in understandable terms, pertinent information related to special education, including the rights of parents and students, due process, IEP development and special education programs;**
- **seek to develop relationships with parents based on mutual respect for their roles in achieving benefits for students with disabilities;**
- **avoid technical terminology;**
- **respect cultural differences;**
- **use the primary language of the home and other modes of communication when appropriate, e.g., translators for parents with limited English-speaking ability and interpreters for parents who are deaf;**
- **respect privacy and confidentiality;**
- **involve parents early in identifying and assessing existing or potential learning problems;**
- **encourage and actively solicit parental participation in all steps of the IEP process and in their child's total education after placement;**
- **regard parents as part of the team and value their contributions; consider all information supplied by parents in decision-making;**
- **encourage parents to plan adaptations within children's progress with regular classroom teachers;**

- maintain regular formal and informal communication to ensure coordination and consistency of goals and instruction at school and at home;
- listen to parents to build positive relationships;
- attempt to involve parents as instructional partners in reinforcing behaviors, skills, and knowledge to be acquired by the students;
- frequently and clearly inform parents about student progress and schedule sufficient time for personal contact;
- make every effort to arrange for formal and informal meetings that are convenient for parents;
- seek input from parents concerning the improvement of special education;
- encourage a working partnership between parents and the school regarding school decisions; and,
- encourage parents to visit the classroom to help them better understand their child's progress.

Parents seek to actively support their children's learning in partnership with school staff by:

- actively participating in developing IEPs for their children with disabilities;
- providing information regarding placement and educational planning for their children;
- communicating often with teachers; showing interest in the school and believing that their children can achieve;
- encouraging their children to learn and having positive expectations for their children;
- providing help at home by carrying out instructional activities that reinforce knowledge, behavior, and skill objectives that their children are working on in school;
- organizing time and space in the home to facilitate learning;
- serving as advocates of special education programs within the school system and generally supporting education; and,

- participating in school activities.

Staff provide on-going support for parents by:

- helping parents understand the physical, emotional, or intellectual disabilities that make learning difficult for their child and their educational implications;
- helping parents recognize and understand specific changes and improvements in their children – behavioral, self-image, peer and intra-family relations, knowledge, and skill development;
- providing parents with time, information and resources for helping students to learn;
- providing educational programs for parents regarding exceptionality, IEP development, instructional strategies and resources, special education programs and support services, least restrictive environment, and other topics;
- providing opportunities for parents to meet with each other, informing parents about support groups and encouraging their participation;
- inviting parents to attend all appropriate district training and information sessions related to the education of students with disabilities;
- implementing a systematic approach to enable trained parents to reach out and support other parents;
- establishing a procedure for parents to register and resolve concerns about their child's educational program;
- establishing an effective parent and educator team in each school building; and,
- establishing a district team composed of a paid parent liaison and a professional parent specialist available for each parent of a student with a disability to assess needs, and to coordinate and provide information, training and referral.

Staff seek to involve parents in program improvement efforts by:

- inviting parents and parent organizations to assist in the planning, development, and evaluation of special education programs and facilities, and to work with school staff to improve programs and services; and,

- **establishing and coordinating an active local Special Education Advisory Committee comprised of parents representing all areas of special education, community professionals, and other interested parties, that meets regularly with school officials, and is involved in the school board's development and review of annual special education program plans.**

An on-going parent training plan provides for:

- **specific training for parents of newly identified or entering students of any age, including information on local school contacts;**

- **specific training related to carrying out individual programming in the areas of behaviors, skills, and academics at home; and,**

- **appropriate training regarding the availability and use of services of various community agencies.**

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: Armor (1976), Brookover (1979b), CA, California SDE (1977), CEC, FL, FL2, GLARRC-DB, Levine (1981), MA, MA-SBE, McCormack (1982), ME, MO, NC, New York SDE (1974), NH, OH, Olsen, PA, SMA, VA, W-B, Wilson (1981)

RATIONALE

The community represents a source of support as well as an important resource for special education programs. To create meaningful linkages between the school and the community, the school district provides information that results in community awareness of student needs, school programs, and school accomplishments. Provisions allow for community input and reaction to programs in ways that are constructive and enhance school-community relationships. There are high levels of cooperation and coordination with community agencies that provide services to students, and district staff work with staff of other agencies, parents, and students to plan and implement transitions from the school to other agencies.

INDICATORS

Community Involvement

The district conducts an on-going public awareness program to inform the community about special education programs and services, successes and new developments, and the rights of students with disabilities and their parents.

Administrators, staff members, students, parents/guardians, and concerned members of the community communicate effectively concerning the needs of students.

The school district cooperates with the community to facilitate school and community interactions that promote effective education for students with disabilities and result in community support.

Local business establishments are encouraged to provide accessibility and special services for persons with disabilities, e.g., braille menus, TDDs, wheelchair ramps.

The special education program uses community resources and services, e.g., volunteers, field experiences, speakers, fiscal support, etc. to the extent available.

Interagency Involvement

The district seeks to ensure a high level of cooperation and coordination with other community agencies through formal and informal interagency agreements, meetings, and on-going correspondence in order to access services for students with disabilities.

The district makes use of the services of various publicly financed agencies.

A district staff person is designated as the liaison between the school district and public and private community agencies.

COMMUNITY AND INTERAGENCY INVOLVEMENT

School personnel are provided with the policies and procedures of outside agencies with whom they cooperate in the provision of special education services.

Outside agencies are provided with local policies and procedures for the provision of special education services.

Appropriate agency representatives are invited to participate in multi-disciplinary team meetings regarding students with disabilities who come under the care of their agencies.

School district staff provide consultation and assistance to personnel non-school settings serving students with disabilities.

School district staff work with staff of other agencies, parents, and students to plan and coordinate the transition of students from the school to other agencies upon completion of the school program.

The school district retains responsibility for the education of all students with disabilities placed in private schools, residential facilities or external day programs, and maintains close communication with such programs when students are placed in them.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: CEC, DEL, FL, GLARRC-DB, McCormack (1982), ME, MO, NASDSE (1976), NH, PA, SMA, Symposium on Effective Schools (1980), VA

5. INSTRUCTION

THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING

INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM CLIMATE

RATIONALE

The primary aims of an instructional program are to add to students' knowledge, to enable them to develop and apply skills, and to foster the development of certain attitudes, understandings, values, and appreciations. To accomplish these aims, school curricula by their nature must be comprehensive and provide a continuum of options and services that meet the needs, abilities, and interests of all students in a range of content areas. It is important that the instructional program for students with disabilities be appropriately derived from regular education curricula, and ensure equal educational opportunities within the least restrictive environments. An effective program also provides for communication and coordination across the various program components, and helps to ease student transitions at every stage from preschool through community integration.

INDICATORS

Curriculum

District-wide curricula provide the base for a comprehensive and sequential program of instruction designed to address the specific abilities and educational needs of each student and to promote individual student achievement.

Curricula programs are planned and developed cooperatively by district professionals, and provisions exist for their participation in the on-going review, evaluation, and revision of curricula.

Curricula establish clear relationships among learning goals and objectives, instructional activities matched to student learning levels, and student evaluations.

Regular education curricula include provisions for adapting materials and instruction to meet the needs of individual students with disabilities.

Special education curricula are derived from the district's regular education curricula and allow for flexibility in addressing the individual needs of students with all types and levels of disabilities.

Special education curricula are designed to assist each student to develop relevant attitudes, knowledge, and skills appropriate to his/her individual interests, abilities, and needs in the following areas:

- **basic skills: language, reading, writing, spelling, mathematics,**
- **science and social studies,**
- **communication skills,**

- social/interpersonal skills,
- pre-vocational and vocational skills,
- technology skills,
- self-help and independent living attitudes, knowledge, and skills,
- positive attitudes toward self and others,
- productive work and study habits,
- art/music and creative expression,
- health and physical development,
- recreation and use of leisure time, and,
- civic and other responsibilities.

The curriculum includes instructional activities designed to facilitate positive interaction among all students in the school and encourage students without disabilities to accept and understand the abilities, needs, and feelings of their peers with disabilities.

Program Coordination and Transitions

Regular education, special education, and vocational education programs are effectively coordinated through district-wide planning, communication, and evaluation efforts involving parents and personnel from all programs.

There is ongoing communication and coordination between special education personnel and personnel from other agencies that serve students with disabilities.

Systematic district procedures involving parents and guardians and appropriate personnel from schools and other agencies are implemented to coordinate student transitions:

- within building level program and services,
- between schools and grade levels,
- from/to other public or non-public agencies (e.g., other school districts, private schools, preschools), and,
- into community and/or post-secondary environments.

Student records, including current individual education programs (IEPs) and related evaluation data and progress reports are transmitted in an appropriate and timely manner prior to the student's placement in another classroom, program, building, or school system.

Transition programs are designed:

- to assist students who have moved from one program to another to adapt to and succeed in their new programs at levels commensurate with expectations; and,

- to enable those students with disabilities who have completed their special education programs to participate successfully in regular education programs without special services.

There are plans to followup on students who leave special education and enter the regular school program or graduate from school.

Continuum of Special Education Program Options

A full continuum of special education and related service program options is available to accommodate individual student characteristics, needs, abilities and interests in accord with the principle of least restrictive environment.

A variety of placement, instructional program, and related services options are available to implement each student's IEP, either within the district or through contractual or other cooperative arrangements with other agencies.

Placement options include:

- regular class placement with indirect services, e.g., consultative services provided for the regular classroom teacher for implementation of the IEP;
- regular class placement with direct services, e.g., with supplementary services including resource rooms, aides and/or itinerant teachers;
- special class placement;
- day and residential school placement;
- instruction in homes, hospitals, or institutions; and,
- community-based programs.

Instructional program options include:

- infant and preschool programs;
- continuum of academic programs, including advanced level opportunity courses;
- continuum of pre-vocational and vocational programs (including community-based competitive and supported work programs as well as school-based programs);
- self-help and independent living programs; and,
- before-school and after-school programs.

Related services are integrated into all special education service delivery options.

Program Evaluation and Improvement

Teachers and administrators strive to improve instructional effectiveness; there is an expectation that educational programs will be changed so that they work better.

The district conducts a systematic and comprehensive evaluation of special education programs and services including classroom academic and vocational programs, curriculum and IEP implementation, resource adequacy, related services, district policies and procedures for identification, evaluation, and movement of students over time, and follow-up of graduates. Adequate resources are allocated for program evaluation.

Program evaluation purposes and procedures are clearly explained to all affected parties, and there is broad participation at all levels in evaluation processes and in the use of results.

A variety of formative and summative evaluation methods and data collection procedures are used for special education program evaluation, including observation and consultation with personnel, formal instruments, and direct and frequent measures of student performance.

The measurement techniques used for program evaluation are reliable and valid. Collection and analysis of evaluation data is managed carefully and appropriate data analysis procedures are used. The context of the evaluation, including political concerns, is taken into consideration.

Special education curricula, teaching materials, and evaluation and instructional activities are reviewed regularly for effectiveness, content, and appropriateness and modified when needed.

Program data and evaluation results are shared with appropriate audiences, including teachers, administrators and other staff, parents, and school board members.

Evaluation and needs assessment data are used to make decisions and to develop plans for the improvement of instruction, services and procedures.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: Austin (1978), Behr (1981), Berman (1978), Blumberg (1980), Bossert (1982), Brookover (1979b), Brundage (1979), CA, CCSSO, CEC, Clark (1980), Cohen, S. (1982), Crandall (1982), DEL, Denham (1980), Doherty (1981), Duke (1982), Edmonds (1979a), Emrick (1977), FL, GLARRC-DB, Hall (1980), Hargrove (1981), ID, Jorgenson (1977), KY, Leithwood (1982), Lipham (1981), Little (1981), MA, Madden (1976), MA-SBE, McCormack (1982), McGeown (1979-80), ME, MO, NAESP (1984), Neidermeyer (1981), New York SDE (1974), NH, OH, PA, Purkey (1983), Roddy (1984), Rosenshine (1983), Sarason (1971), SMA, Stallings (1981a), TN, VA, Venezky (1979), VT, W-B, Weber (1971), Wellisch (1978), Wilson (1981)

RATIONALE

Instructional planning practices which support individualized programming and the least restrictive environment are central to an effective education for students with disabilities. Systematic procedures for student screening, identification, referral, and evaluation are necessary to ensure that each student receives an appropriate program of instruction and related services. It is important that planning approaches include communication processes which contribute to staff and parent understanding of procedures, and evaluation processes that are comprehensive, valid, non-discriminatory, and provide adequate information for making program decisions. The development of the individualized education program (IEP) is participatory, includes elements that are appropriate to the student's assessed needs and level of performance, and leads to appropriate least restrictive placements. Finally, instructional planning incorporates overall program evaluation and improvement practices to enhance the quality and effectiveness of programs and services.

INDICATORS

Student Screening, Identification, Pre-referral, and Referral

Screening and identification efforts include:

- community awareness programs;
- cooperation with other agencies, e.g., health, mental health, welfare agencies, and parent organizations;
- screening across all age levels from birth to 21; and,
- on-going screening procedures including monitoring all children for expected progress.

Pre-referral procedures:

- Consultation and support are available to teachers and other school personnel to assist parents and teachers in exploring alternative approaches for meeting the individual needs of any student experiencing difficulties, prior to the student's formal referral for special education evaluation.

Referral procedures:

- are specific and are disseminated to all school personnel;
- follow a written format including reasons for referral, and questions to be answered through multi-disciplinary evaluation;
- assign specific responsibilities for each student's evaluation, case management, and/or follow-up; and,
- protect the student's due process and procedural safeguard rights.

Evaluation processes include:

- **an explanation to parents of tests and testing procedures in conjunction with the request for parental consent obtained prior to the evaluation of each referred student;**

- **the collection of background information from parents, teachers, school psychologists and other personnel, and written formal and informal description(s) of student performance (educational, behavioral, and social) in school and at home, such as:**

  . **level of intellectual functioning,**
  . **classroom performance in comparison with classroom peers,**
  . **functional levels of abilities, achievement and/or skill development,**
  . **adaptive functioning within a variety of social environments,**
  . **error patterns (as noted in test protocols, work samples, observations),**
  . **specific behaviors that might interfere with the learning process,**
  . **learning style, and**
  . **incentive-motivational style;**

- **a comprehensive evaluation of each referred student conducted by a multi-disciplinary team in accordance with federal, state, and local policies and procedures; and,**

- **observation by staff of students with whom they will be working, and observations of proposed placements for the student by staff and parents.**

Evaluation procedures:

- are age-appropriate and valid for the specific purposes for which they are used;

- include a variety of assessment methods and measures in addition to tests, e.g., observation, review of student history, conferences;

- provide for assessing the range of behaviors and cognitions targeted in the referral or the student's IEP;

- are non-discriminatory; i.e., are language and culture-appropriate and conducted in the child's native language or other mode of communication;

- go beyond the purpose of labeling, classification and placement to provide information for planning instruction and related services for individual students;

- are administered by appropriately qualified personnel; and,

- minimize categorical labeling of students.

Evaluation results:

- are adequately supported by tests or observations and are summarized in clear, concise language that a student's parents and teachers can read and understand;

- provide adequate information to allow the multi-disciplinary team to make decisions about IEP development or revisions, including:

  . eligibility for special education,
  . instructional services,
  . related services,
  . placement, and
  . long-range planning;

- are explained to school personnel, parents, and students and, if special education programs are indicated, the implications of such action are explained to parents; and,

- include recommendations for school personnel regarding the least restrictive environment, including special education alternatives and appropriate assistance for students who are referred back to the regular education program.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Participants

IEPs are planned together by parents, special and regular education teachers, appropriate specialists, and students, if appropriate, to ensure full communication about evaluation results, the student's progress, and program and placement alternatives.

Parents are invited and encouraged to attend meetings and to participate as equal members of the multi-disciplinary team.

Students are provided with opportunities to make choices and to participate in the development or review of their IEPs.

In multi-disciplinary team meetings, a concerted effort is made to include representatives of all agencies providing services to the student with disabilities, e.g., probation, court-appointed guardians, legal counsel, health, welfare, social services.

Process

Multi-disciplinary team meetings include a qualified special educator, the student's teacher(s) and parents, the student when appropriate, and other individuals at the discretion of the parent or agency.

Team meetings are held to review all evaluation data and to develop or revise an IEP for each student.

At IEP meetings, parents are informed about evaluation findings and alternatives available to their child, and the IEP is developed jointly by school staff and parents.

The IEP development process is coordinated and conducted in a well-organized, professional manner.

A copy of the IEP is given to parents and a copy is available to those teachers who are directly involved in the education of the exceptional student.

Parents, school staff, and as appropriate students, fully understand the program, goals, and specific objectives in the IEP.

Content

IEPs are comprised of elements appropriate to the assessed needs and levels of performance of individual learners and may include:

- specific descriptions of the student's present levels of educational performance including intellectual functioning, physical and health status, academic achievement, personal and social adjustment, and where appropriate, prevocational, vocational, and self-help skills;

- a statement of annual goals that describes the educational performance that the student is expected to achieve by the end of the school year;

- a statement of objectives that are measurable intermediate steps between the present level of educational performance and the annual goals, and that include functional skills the student can apply in school and in post-school environments;

- special education and related services necessary for the student to meet the specified goals and objectives;
- the student's placement, including descriptions of the extent to which the student will participate in regular education (academic and non-academic) programs, and will have planned daily interaction with non-disabled peers;
- a rationale for why the educational placement is the least restrictive environment for the student;
- criteria and objectives to prepare each student to move toward a less restrictive environment, including exit from the special education program if appropriate;
- instructional strategies and appropriate materials geared to the student's living style and developmental age;
- descriptions of necessary postural positions if the student has a physical disability;
- descriptions of adaptive or prosthetic devices when necessary;
- transportation requirements;
- goals, objectives, and plans related to transitions; e.g., long-range goals for education, employment, and for living as independently as possible in the community, and plans for coordinating with agencies that are currently serving or will be serving the student;
- goals and objectives to involve parents in the student's education;
- objectives related to the completion of graduation requirements (if age-appropriate);
- the date when required services will begin and the length of time the services will be given;
- an indication of the individuals who are responsible for implementation of the IEP, including the regular classroom teacher, and a statement describing each individual's specific responsibilities; and,
- objective criteria, evaluation procedures, and schedules for determining, on at least an annual basis, whether the instructional objectives are being achieved.

Student Placement

Placement and assignment of students to classes and teachers reflect an assessment of each student's needs and each teacher's skills.

Placements are based on the educational needs of students with disabilities, rather than on program availability.

Placements are consistent with the concept of least restrictive environment.

Students with disabilities are educated in the regular education environment, unless conditions exist that prohibit implementation of the IEP in the regular education environment with the provision of supportive services and aids.

Student placement decisions take into consideration the abilities and needs of the student and the numbers and characteristics of other students in the alternative placements being considered.

Students attend schools appropriate for their chronological ages, and if special class placement is appropriate:

- **students are placed in classrooms that are in close proximity to classes of non-disabled peers;**
- **students who are receiving special educational services are reintegrated into less restrictive environments over time to the extent appropriate for individual students; and,**
- **exit guidelines are used to guide reintegration.**

The appropriateness of special education placements is monitored, and intervention is made at the appropriate level to correct problems as they develop.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: CA, CEC, DEL, GLARRC-DB, KY, MA, McCormack (1982), ME, MO, NAESP (1984), NASDSE (1976), NC, NH, OH, Olsen, PA, SMA, TN, VA

RATIONALE

Student performance is most directly and significantly affected by the quantity and quality of instructional time. Because of this, a strong commitment to ensuring that instructional time is sufficient and occurs under the best possible circumstances is an essential element of an effective education.

INDICATORS

Sufficient time is allocated to accomplish the school's educational objectives.

- **The school calendar is organized to provide maximum learning time;**
- **prior to adoption, new instructional programs or school procedures are evaluated according to their potential impact on learning time; and,**
- **the school day, classes and other activities start and end on time, and begin and end at the same time for all students.**

Effective use of time is emphasized throughout the school:

- **school events are scheduled to avoid disruption of learning time,**
- **students are taken out of regular classrooms, either for academic or non-academic purposes, as little as possible; and,**
- **staff understand time use priorities and follow school procedures designed to maximize learning time.**

Instructional activities absorb most of the school day:

- **Allocated time – Teachers:**
  - **. establish priorities for using class time and allocate time for each subject or lesson;**
  - **. emphasize time in instruction by continually scheduling students in direct instruction and minimizing time in non-instructional activities; and,**
  - **. prepare students for transitions in advance and keep transition times between lessons short.**
- **Engaged time – Teachers:**
  - **. gain and maintain students' attention and monitor students' time on task (i.e., time spent actively engaged in learning);**

- . circulate among students between lessons to assist students who need help or have completed assigned tasks, and to monitor progress; and,
- . emphasize engaged time, i.e., the use and amount of time during which students are actively engaged in learning activities.

The school day for students with disabilities who are in specially designed education programs is organized into reasonable, flexible blocks of time that allow for effective instruction.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: Arlin (1979), Armor (1976), Berliner (1979), Brookover (1979a), Brophy (1979), CA, CCSSO, Cohen, S. (1982), Cooley (1980), CT, CTP, Denham (1980), Edmonds (1979a), Emmer (1980b and 1982), Englert, Evertson (1982b), Gambrell (1981), Glass (1977), Glynn (1973), Kounin (1977), McCormack (1982), ME, Medley (1979), Murphy (1982), NAESP (1984), NH, Olsen, PA, Ramey (1982), Rosenshine (1978), Rosenshine (1979), Rosenshine (1983), Sanford (1981), Stallings (1974, 1980 and 1981b), Teacher, VA, VT, Wiley (1974), Wilson (1981), Wyne (1979)

RATIONALE

Instructional practices represent the delivery system for accomplishing the school's mission and meeting the individual needs of students. Effectiveness is closely tied to an array of factors that include manageable staff/student ratios, the variety and adequacy of instructional approaches used to promote student learning, and the appropriateness of teaching behaviors and methods used to support individual learning styles and progress. For students with disabilities, it is important that instructional practices contribute to successful IEP implementation, incorporating the use of materials, equipment, and resources that are appropriate to the age, skills, and developmental levels of students. Finally, it is essential that instructional practices are organized to maximize student integration into all aspects of school life on a regular basis.

INDICATORS

Organization of Instruction

Staff/Student Ratios

Staff/student ratios are manageable for all academic and non-academic programs and services.

Class sizes and caseloads allow staff to meet the individual instructional and other needs of students with disabilities.

The number of students with disabilities within a class or related services programs reflects not only state standards, but also the nature and severity of students' disabilities and the subject matter to be taught. Aides and other assistants are employed when necessary.

Instructional Approaches

Teachers continually diagnose academic needs and prescribe appropriate educational activities for each student, considering learning styles and rates of learning.

Teachers use a variety of alternative instructional approaches appropriate to the varied developmental levels, learning styles, and current levels of performance of students.

Lesson plans are developed prior to instruction, are based on logical, sequential elements of instruction, and include instructional resources and teaching activities matched to student learning objectives.

To the extent possible, learning in the classroom is generalized and enriched through diversified activities – e.g., directed class and small group instruction, learning centers, projects, laboratories, and experiences.

Teachers use a variety of instructional grouping patterns, ranging from whole class to one-to-one instruction. Grouping practices are flexible and serve the varying needs and changing abilities of students.

Teachers teach students not just what to learn, but how to learn and to value learning.

Teaching Methods and Behaviors

Pre-instruction and initial presentation

Teachers carefully prepare students for lessons, explain objectives in simple language, check to be sure that objectives are understood, and refer to them throughout lessons to maintain focus.

Teachers describe the relationship of a current lesson to previous study, review key concepts or skills previously covered, and provide students with opportunities to use previously learned skills.

Teachers provide an overview of lesson activities and clear written and verbal directions. Teachers give detailed and redundant explanations and instruction when presenting new content and skills, provide numerous examples, and check for student understanding.

During instruction

Teachers allow sufficient time to present, demonstrate, and explain new content and skills.

Teachers present new material one step at a time.

Teaching and learning activities involve all available senses – visual, hearing, moving, and touching.

Teachers summarize the main point(s) of the lesson at the end of the lesson or instructional activity.

Teachers give students ample opportunity for guided practice prior to assigning independent seat work or homework.

Teachers frequently check student learning to see if students understand material and are ready to move on, and to find out if teaching methods are working.

Seatwork assignments, that provide opportunities for students to practice new skills, are divided into small segments.

Teachers select problems and other academic tasks that are well matched to lesson content so student success rate is high. Seatwork assignments also provide variety and challenge.

Students are given practice activities that emphasize applications of learned skills or concepts in daily living situations to make learning meaningful.

Teachers move among students when they are involved in practice seatwork, and provide corrective feedback for positive reinforcement and for additional instruction where necessary.

Students master knowledge and skills before new material is presented. When students don't understand, teachers provide additional instruction, allow for practice, and retest until the student succeeds.

When skills are mastered, students are allowed to move on to new material.

Teachers frequently review key ideas and skills throughout the year to check and strengthen student retention.

Post-instruction

Students are provided with opportunities for independent practice with frequent feedback and positive reinforcement.

Homework is assigned to support and reinforce classroom learning after students have achieved a reasonable success rate. It is typically in small increments and at a level that students can complete successfully. Homework is corrected and returned to students promptly.

Parents are told about student successes and are requested to help keep students involved in learning. Teachers let parents know that homework is important and give them tips on how to help students keep working.

Teachers evaluate student performance by objective standards, not by peer comparison, and use frequent and consistent praise for excellence in achievement and behavior to motivate students. Rewards are appropriate to the developmental levels of students.

IEP Implementation

Use of labels is minimized. Students are described in terms of educationally functional behaviors, rather than disability categories. Programs relate to the functional levels of student performance rather than to category of disability.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Each student placed in the district's continuum of special education services is provided with an appropriate individual education program. Student placement, special education, and related services are implemented as specified in the student's IEP.

Special education teachers use the IEP as a guide for daily lesson plans and instruction for students with disabilities. Curricula are adapted for individual students by varying instructional methods, materials, pace, and assignments.

A variety of instructional methods, materials, activities, adaptive equipment, and evaluation methods are used to assist individual students with disabilities in meeting the goals and objectives specified in their IEPs.

Specialized materials, equipment and other resources, required to implement each student's IEP are provided.

Materials, activities, and equipment used to implement the curriculum instruction specified in IEPs are appropriate to age, skills, and developmental levels of students.

Regular education teachers provide appropriate support for students with disabilities and adjust the regular education program as needed; adaptations of regular academic and vocational programs are implemented as specified in IEPs.

Instructional approaches, curriculum content, and materials of supplementary instructional services are coordinated with classroom programs.

As necessary, teachers and related services specialists routinely assist students with daily living skills in dressing, eating, and toileting.

Each student receives appropriate direct or consultative related services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, and/or orientation and mobility training.

The implementation of IEPs (service delivery) is coordinated. Persons from outside agencies are involved in IEP implementation as specified by the multi-disciplinary team.

Parents are assisted and encouraged to participate in the implementation of their children's IEPs by supplementing school instruction with supportive home activities.

School staff monitor IEP implementation on an on-going basis.

Students who are referred for possible special education services continue within their current placements until the process of determining student eligibility and the need for special education services is completed and implemented; referred students may be provided with modified instruction/services while the evaluation process is being completed.

Student Integration

Interaction of students with disabilities with their non-disabled peers is encouraged in all aspects of school life on a regular basis.

Students with disabilities have access to and are encouraged to participate in all academic vocational, intramural and extracurricular programs and activities on an equal basis with non-disabled students.

The amount of time and the extent to which each student with a disability is integrated with non-disabled peers corresponds with IEP specifications.

Movement of students to less restrictive environments, as appropriate to their abilities and special needs, is encouraged by district staff and facilitated by the district's continuum of services and entry and exit criteria.

Students with disabilities are given opportunities to go into the community for functional learning instruction and are accepted in the school and community.

Student Evaluation Practices

For all students:

- student progress and achievement are monitored systematically on an on-going basis, using formal and informal methods including test results, grade reports, attendance records and other information to identify potential problems;
- teachers use evaluations for formative purposes; i.e., instructional diagnosis, prompt feedback to students and parents, and modification of instructional design;
- evaluation of performance is based on mastery of the defined learning objectives of the curriculum;
- teachers prepare and use valid, reliable instruments for student evaluation;

- students are informed of evaluation results promptly, in clear and simple language in order to help students understand and correct errors and learn correct responses; and,

- evaluation results are used to develop appropriate educational plans.

For students with disabilities:

- progress is evaluated with respect to the objectives specified in the IEP, using measurement techniques that are valid and appropriate for the objectives being measured, including a wide range of techniques such as formal and/or informal pre- and post-evaluations, personal observation, review of representative samples of each student's work, and interviews with students, teachers, parents, and others;

- annual program reviews are effectively coordinated in accordance with local policies and procedures;

- results of annual IEP reviews are reported to and discussed with parents, school personnel, and other service providers;

- results of student evaluations, IEP reviews, and teacher reports are used to make decisions regarding students' continuing eligibility and need for special education, appropriateness of placement and related services, and need for changes in instructional services; and,

- grades and promotions are based on students' achievement of goals and objectives (academic, vocational, social, self-help) specified in their individual IEPs.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: Armor (1976), Bachelor (1982), Becker (1977 and 1980), Behr (1981), Berliner (1976 and 1979), Block (1976), Bloom, (1974 and 1976), Blumberg (1980), Brookover (1979a,b), Brophy (1979, 1980, 1981, 1982 a,b), Burns (1979), CA, California SDE (1977), CEC, Cobb (1973), Cohen, M. (1981), Cohen, S. (1982), Crawford (1975), CTP, DEL, Denham (1980), Doherty (1981), Duffy (1980), Edmonds (1979a and b), Emmer (1981), Englert, Evertson (1980a, 1981, 1982a,b), Fitzpatrick (1982), FL, Gage (1978), GLARRC-DB, Good (1977, 1979a,b,c), Gross (1965), Hall (1980), Hunter (1977), Hyman (1979), Jorgenson (1977), Kennedy (1978), KY, LA, Larkin (1976), Leithwood (1982), Levin (1981), Levine (1981a, 1982 a,b),

Instructional Practices sources continued: Lipham (1981), Lohman (1982), Lortie (1975), MA-SBE, Madden (1976), McCormack (1982), McGeown (1979-80), McKenzie (1979), ME, Medley (1978 and 1979), Milazzo (1982), MO, NASDSE (1976), NAESP (1984), NC, Neidermeyer (1981), New York SDE (1974), NH, Odden (1982), Olsen, PA, Purkey (1983), Ramey (1982), Reid (1980), Roddy (1984), Rosenshine (1979 and 1983), Rosswork (1977), Rutter (1979), Sarason (1971), SMA, Soar (1973), Stallings (1974 and 1979), Teacher, VA, Venezky (1979), VT, W-B, Walker (1976), Webb (1980), Weber (1971), Wellisch (1978), Wilson (1981), Wynne (1980)

RATIONALE

Studies of school effectiveness have indicated the importance of positive school and classroom environments. In effective schools, school and classroom environments are safe, disciplined, and orderly. There is an atmosphere that is free from the threat of physical harm or fear, that leads to productive teaching and learning. Students feel secure and supported in a caring environment where they can succeed. The climate for special education reflects a sense of belonging among students and staff members, and fosters positive self-concepts in students. School and classroom standards for acceptable behavior are clear and administered consistently and fairly. Teachers use a variety of classroom management skills to structure the learning process and maintain student attention.

INDICATORS

Rules for acceptable behavior of staff, students, parents, and administrators within the school are:

- cooperatively developed;
- not overly authoritarian;
- consistently and fairly enforced;
- reviewed and reinforced through structured faculty/administration interaction; and,
- clearly communicated to students.

Conditions for learning are pleasant. All school areas are kept clean and in good repair, and made attractive.

The district and school climates are conducive to learning and positive human interaction and encourage the capabilities and emphasize the worth of all individuals. Students feel secure and supported in a caring environment where they can succeed.

Special education spaces are pleasant, clean, safe, well-maintained, and respected by students and staff members.

The climate for special education in each school reflects pride and a sense of belonging among students and staff members. Students and staff members feel that they are "a part of" the total school process.

Learning environments promote educational growth and the development of positive self-concepts in students with disabilities.

Classroom standards for acceptable behavior and consequences of misbehavior are written, taught and reviewed with the students in detail early in the school year, and are administered consistently, fairly and promptly.

Teachers use a variety of classroom management skills to create a positive, expectant, and orderly classroom environment by actively structuring the learning process, managing time, and maintaining student attention.

Teachers stop disruptions quickly, taking care to avoid disrupting the whole class. Teachers minimize discipline problems and off-task behaviors by using appropriate class management techniques and by modeling and reinforcing appropriate behavior. In disciplinary action, the teacher focuses on the inappropriate behavior, not on the student's personality and uses methods that do not undermine the individual's dignity.

There are smooth and efficient classroom routines. Students are taught and required to bring the materials they need to class. Teachers have assignments and materials ready for students, and classes start on time and purposefully.

Teachers structure their classrooms so they can give additional time and attention to students who need extra assistance without ignoring the needs of other students.

Physical space and instructional materials are organized to minimize disruptive movement around the classroom and to facilitate easy access to high use materials.

Teachers pay attention to student interests, problems, and accomplishments in social interactions both in and out of the classroom. Teachers make sure they let students know they really care.

Special and regular education staff encourage student independence as much as possible and encourage students to believe that they control their own futures.

Teachers effectively coordinate the services of aides in the implementation of various phases of the classroom program and use peer-tutoring and peer-counseling programs if appropriate.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: Anderson, L.M. (1980), Armor (1976), Berliner (1976), Brophy (1970, 1974, 1979, 1980 and 1981), CEC, Cooley (1980), CTP, DEL, Edmonds (1979a), Emmer (1980a,b, 1981, 1982), Englert, Evertson (1980a, 1981, 1982b)), GLARRC-DB, Good (1979a), Hunter (1977), I-P, Kounin (1977), MA-SBE, ME, Medley (1978 and 1979), NAESP (1984), NH, L'Leary (1979), Olsen, PA, Rosswork (1977), Rutter (1979), Sanford (1981), Soar (1973), Symposium on Effective Schools (1980), VA, Walker (1976)

6. PROGRAM AND STUDENT OUTCOMES

STUDENT PERFORMANCE, COMPETENCIES, BEHAVIORS, AND ATTITUDES

SATISFACTION

POST-SCHOOL OUTCOMES

RATIONALE

An effective educational program ensures the development of academic, vocational, and social competencies commensurate with each student's potential, and fosters high levels of student attendance and program completion. Students are provided with opportunities to develop and express creative interests and talents, and their school experiences cultivate a positive self-concept as well as positive values and attitudes.

In addition, students with disabilities develop the self-help and independent living skills that contribute toward a productive lifestyle and full participation in the life of the community.

INDICATORS

Attendance, graduation, dropout, and suspension rates of students with disabilities compare favorably with rates of regular education students.

Students with disabilities complete high school, graduating with a standard or special diploma, or certificate of completion.

Non- and limited-English-proficient students with disabilities progress at a satisfactory rate in their special education and regular education programs.

Students with disabilities develop academic competencies.

- Commensurate with their abilities, they develop competencies in appropriate academic curriculum areas such as reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, cultural arts, and technology; and,

- They achieve or go beyond their individualized educational program (IEP) goals and objectives in academic areas.

Students with disabilities develop vocational competencies commensurate with abilities and interests.

- They acquire job preparation and vocational skills;

- They demonstrate pre-employment competencies such as:

  . ability to identify career or vocational interests,
  . knowledge of selected career and requisite skills and attributes,
  . ability to identify training and employment options and opportunities, and
  . ability to seek employment or further education or training;

STUDENT PERFORMANCE, COMPETENCIES, BEHAVIORS, AND ATTITUDES

- as appropriate, they develop job-specific skills, including knowledge and skills normally required to carry out entry-level tasks of a specific occupation or cluster of occupations; and,

- they develop work maturity skills, including those skills needed to obtain and retain a job.

Students with disabilities develop positive behaviors and attitudes including:

- positive self-concepts,
- positive attitudes toward others,
- productive work and study habits, and
- effective social skills.

Students with disabilities develop and express creative interests and talents.

Students with disabilities develop self-help and independent living skills in such areas as:

- applying problem-solving and decision-making skills;

- communicating needs and feelings effectively;

- knowing about essential aids and equipment and how to acquire them;

- knowing about benefit programs and financial assistance opportunities, and how to acquire them;

- understanding affirmative action, fair employment, and other anti-discrimination guarantees that affect them;

- advocating for legal, personal, or consumer rights;

- negotiating confidently with agencies or individuals to acquire essential benefits and services;

- understanding how earned and unearned income affects benefits eligibility;

- knowing about and understanding how to acquire personal care assistance to live independently;

- knowing about housing options and understanding how to acquire them;

- applying the principles of accessibility to homes;

- knowing about transportation options and how to acquire/use them; and,

- being comfortable in social situations and using leisure time productively.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: CA, CCSSO, DEL, FL, GLARRC-DB, IL, MO, NC, NH, NY, PA, Tindall (1984), VA

RATIONALE

An effective educational program fosters a sense of satisfaction in the individuals who are major participants and stakeholders in the process – students, parents, school staff, and community members. School staff need to feel a sense of worth and challenge in the work they do and the impact they have. Students need to feel good about their school experiences and satisfied with their progress. Parents need to feel confident that school programs will lead to successful achievement and positive benefits for their children.

At the community level, understanding of and support for educational programs enhance the potential for program effectiveness. Also, employers' willingness to hire graduates and their satisfaction with the job performance of students and graduates influence the potential for effective integration of individuals with disabilities into community life.

INDICATORS

Students

Students with disabilities are satisfied with the educational services they have received and feel that the special education, regular education, and vocational education programs have met their needs.

Students with disabilities are satisfied with their progress in school.

Students with disabilities are satisfied with the way they have been treated in school by faculty, staff, and other students and with their level of integration with non-disabled peers.

Parents

Parents of children with disabilities are satisfied with:

- the special education program, procedures, and services provided for their children, and with their children's progress;
- their level of participation and involvement;
- the way their child is treated at school by faculty, staff, and other students;
- their child's integration with non-disabled students.

School Staff: Teachers, Administrators, Program Specialists

Staff members express a sense of challenge and satisfaction in their professional roles and feel they make a difference, as a result of involvement in decision-making.

Staff are satisfied with the inclusion of students with disabilities within the regular education program, and have positive attitudes toward special education.

Staff are satisfied with the special education program and services in such areas as: policies and procedures, instructional delivery and results, and in-service training.

Employers

Employers express willingness to employ students/graduates with disabilities, and are satisfied with the performance of these students and graduates.

School Board and Community

The school board indicates support for the special education program through the allocation of necessary resources.

Students with disabilities are viewed positively and treated well in the community.

Parent and non-parent taxpayers indicate satisfaction with, and demonstrate support for, the special education program.

Community leaders and business persons indicate support for the special education program through donations or contributions, employment of graduates, and support of special activities.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: CA, CCSSO, DEL, GLARRC-DB, MO, NH, VA

RATIONALE

An effective education enables individuals to function successfully in society and to be contributing members of the community. This includes pursuing post-secondary education/training commensurate with abilities and interests; finding and maintaining employment situations that lead to economic security; and attaining living situations that represent independent and least restrictive lifestyles.

INDICATORS

Special education graduates achieve the post-secondary options they desire, including continuing their education, entering job training, and/or finding and maintaining employment.

Special education graduates obtain sufficient income through employment and/or benefits to be as financially independent as possible.

Special education graduates achieve an independent lifestyle, becoming integrated into the community to the fullest extent possible.

Special education graduates participate fully in society by voting, becoming members of civil groups and other community organizations, and taking part in social and recreational activities.

Indicators in this section were drawn from the following sources: CCSSO, FL, MO, NH

7. DOCUMENT USE AND DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

USES OF THE REFERENCE DOCUMENT

Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education has been developed to serve as a reference tool to improve the education of all students with disabilities. The purpose of this section is to describe potential uses and factors to be considered prior to use.

Intended Uses

Thrcugh the efforts of the National RRC Panel on Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education, many different uses of this reference tool were identified. Four primary uses for the Effectiveness Indicators were specified by the Panel in the development process. These were to:

1. assist in setting goals, clarifying values, and building consensus,
2. serve as a basis for identifying or defining program evaluation questions,
3. provide a resource for parent and staff development and training, and
4. stimulate research and development activities.

Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education can be a resource for each of these uses at the school, district, or state levels, depending on the needs and configuration of the agencies or organizations involved. It also can be used by institutions of higher education (IHE's) as a guide for research and in the teaching process. It can be used by private schools or private school organizations. Implicit in all of these potential uses is a focus on defining, improving, and/or developing effective special education programs leading to improved or expanded outcomes for students with disabilities.

Undoubtedly a variety of other uses for the reference source will be identified. The Panel intended to develop a document that could be used by all people concerned with education, with primary emphasis on state and local education administrators, teachers, and parents. The following matrix provides a visual depiction of the anticipated most frequent uses of this reference tool by various groups.

Matrix of Primary Uses by User Groups

	Setting Goals	Program Evaluation Criteria/Questions	Parent/Staff Training	Research/ Development
Parent groups	X		X	
Teacher groups	X		X	
LEA administrators	X	X	X	
SEA administrators	X	X	X	X

Concerns and Issues

The process for using Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education is as important as the product itself. Implementing school improvement efforts involves complex processes. Both commitment and consensus must be developed by key people in the process including school staff, parents, students, and school board and other community members. Careful planning, coordination, and monitoring of the implementation process must be conducted. Implementation and institutionalization of changes in any human organization are time consuming and slow processes.

The Panel identified several concerns and issues regarding the process of using this document as a reference tool. Specifically, the Panel emphasized that it represents a beginning point, not an end product. Perhaps it should be viewed as one "brick" within the building of a well-managed system for educating students with disabilities. It must be used appropriately to contribute to the structure of the building. It should be noted as well that Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education represents the ideal for programs educating students with disabilities. Improvement is a long-term process that should not be expected to occur immediately.

Additional concerns emphasized by the Panel which should be considered carefully by any group reading or using the indicators include the following:

Comparisons. It is not intended for use in comparing individual states, districts, schools, or classrooms. It is intended, rather, as a tool in the efforts toward excellence in education.

Evaluation System. It is not in and of itself an evaluation document. It could be used as a basis for developing a local or state level evaluation system. To do so, the agency would need to conduct an extensive process to identify the indicators that are relevant and develop methods for measuring the indicators.

Level of Measurement. Indicators include both quantifiable items which can be measured with relative ease and qualitative items which are more difficult to measure. Some terms can be clearly defined, but no consensus exists regarding the definitions of certain other terms. During local planning processes, it will be essential for the various people involved to agree on working definitions of these terms. They must as well agree on standards and procedures for those qualitative items selected as priority areas for improvement. The indicator statements allow for the development of specific definitions and measurement methodologies which are appropriate to the individual contexts, needs, resources and capacities of each district, program, school, or student.

Comprehensiveness of the Document. No program, school, or district could address all of these indicators at the same time, nor would it be appropriate to do so. Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education provides a menu from which groups may select priorities through a consensus-building process.

Limits on Comprehensiveness. Although there are many indicators listed in this reference tool, there may be many other indicators that could be added. Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education is limited by the types of primary documents used in the development process. It should be recognized that other valid effectiveness indicators may exist currently in other systems or may be generated through the consensus building process at the local level.

Placing Blame. The indicators should be used to identify, support, and provide public recognition for effective programs, policies, and practices. Deficiencies should be identified within the positive perspective of improvement.

Formative Evaluation. A final caution deserves special emphasis. School improvement efforts require a substantial amount of time and effort for implementation. Effective formative evaluation is essential to guide the fine-tuning of such efforts. Parents, advocates, school personnel, school boards, and state education agency staff should avoid making premature decisions about the quality of programs and services based on initial outcome evaluations.

Examples of Uses

Effectiveness indicators have been or are currently being used in a variety of settings across the country. Five projects are described below to provide concrete examples of how state and local groups are using information similar to that contained in Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education, and how, in the case of the Florida SEA, a draft of this reference tool was used recently.

The Florida Experience. Since 1982, the Florida Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students has funded Project EESE, a special project to help local school districts conduct program evaluation based on local needs Project EESE (Evaluation of Exceptional Student Education) has generated a set of documents describing the evaluation process. Not included, however, are specific evaluation questions, criteria, or indicators. Florida will disseminate copies of Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education to all local school districts to assist them in identifying evaluation questions, criteria, and indicators that are applicable and validated at the local level. The 500 pages of EESE documents will facilitate the adoption, adaptation, and validation process.

At the state level, as part of the Department of Education Program Review Process, the Bureau has been directed to look at essential elements of an effective ESE system. Six areas for review were selected:

1. continuum of alternative placements
2. parent involvement
3. services to pre-kindergarten handicapped students
4. educational technology
5. transition of students from secondary program to work or post-secondary education
6. program evaluation

The Bureau staff, in a group process, used the draft indicators document to select subcomponents or indicators of each topic. Data collection to determine the presence or absence of the indicators will be conducted primarily through review of student records.

The Minnesota Twin Cities Metropolitan Area Project. During the 1985-86 school year, 22 districts in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area chose to address cooperatively their common need to improve programs serving students with emotional and behavioral problems. Working together, district personnel from the 22 districts, state department of education staff, and university personnel developed program quality indicators specifically for programs in this disability area. Districts are using the self-devised quality indicators for program design, program improvement, and program evaluation.

The New Hampshire Special Education Project. The Special Education Division of the New Hampshire Department of Education is developing a comprehensive evaluation system for assessing the effectiveness of special education programs in New Hampshire school districts. The "effectiveness system" is based on indicators of effectiveness developed through both an extensive literature review as well as stakeholder responses from New Hampshire local school district educators, state education agency representatives, parents, school board members, and community representatives. (The New Hampshire database was incorporated into this reference tool.)

The process included developing a survey instrument consisting of a list of effectiveness indicators with a rating scale for respondents to indicate the relative importance of each item. The survey was mailed to 740 individuals in New Hampshire including special education administrators and staff, superintendents, principals, regular education teachers, and parents of students with disabilities. Indicators receiving high stakeholder ratings form the basis of the effectiveness system. Instrumentation is being developed to allow school districts to assess their performance related to: Program and Student Outcomes; Philosophy, Policies, and Procedures; Resources, Curriculum, and Services; Instructional Practices; Parent Participation; The Learning Environment; Staff Behaviors and Attitudes; and Leadership and Professional Development. Instrumentation includes an array of questionnaires, checklists, observation scales, and interview protocols, as well as procedures and formats for accessing outcome data. In 1986, the system was piloted in three New Hampshire districts producing comprehensive "Profiles of Effectiveness in Special Education" reports. Future activities will involve continued development and refinement of the system, and expansion of its use by other New Hampshire school districts.

The SPEED/SMA Illinois Project. The SPEED/SMA inquiry was a three pronged approach to establishing a comprehensive system for a special education program description and evaluation. The three components of the process carried out were:

1. Development of a "conceptual model" for defining a special education program.

2. The development of a generic set of "criterion statements for special education programs and services" that would serve as quality statements to be used as the basis for defining programs based on the approved conceptual model.

3. Development of processes and procedures to use the standards set by the generic "criterion statements" and "specific program descriptions," that were written on the basis of the "criterion statement" to be used as the standard by which special education programs would be evaluated using data analysis and discrepancy statements.

The critical process in the inquiry was the development of the criterion statements that represented the communities' statements of quality special education programs. This process was carried out by involving professionals from both regular and special education at the administrative, supervisory, teaching, and support staff levels. In addition, board of education members, parents, students, representatives from community and state agencies and other interested people participated in the actual writing and confirmation process. These members represented the best talent

that could be found in the fourteen (14) member school districts' SPEED special education cooperative, in the fifty-five (55) district SMA regional special education cooperative and from the State of Illinois. Once completed, the "criterion statements" or indicators of quality were adopted by the entire community through board approval processes.

The process has led to a quality program evaluation system within the area. Discrepancy evaluations are to be conducted based on program descriptions that represent the statements of quality being strived for in individual programs. Automatic re-evaluation processes take place on a specific time cycle.

The Vermont Special Education Evaluation Project. By March, 1987 the Vermont State Department of Education will complete and pilot a program evaluation model, one part of which is an extensive set of program quality indicators. The indicators were derived through a consensus building process involving as many as 1,600 parents, teachers, pediatricians, legislators, principals, special education directors, superintendents, college and university personnel, state department staff, and private service providers.

The indicators will be adopted by the Vermont State Board of Education and recommended for use at all levels from individual classroom to statewide applications. Quite separate from the normal state-level compiance monitoring task, the quality indicators are viewed as a fertile and Vermont-legitimated resource for going beyond compliance to special education programs of quality.

Learning from the examples. These five examples demonstrate how effectiveness indicators are crucial to program improvement efforts. In each case it would have been beneficial for the group or agency to have had access to a reference tool as comprehensive as Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education. Having this reference tool available could have decreased development time, increased sharing through inter-group collaboration, and increased the range of options considered.

Other Potential Uses

There are many other ways Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education can be used. Examples of uses at various levels of the education system include the following:

1. States can use the indicators to develop a statewide school improvement program; e.g., developing a self-evaluation system for use by local districts in planning for school improvement efforts or targeting statewide technical assistance and training programs.

2. Local district personnel can use the document to select priorities, conduct needs assessments, and develop and monitor local school and special education program improvement plans.

3. Regular and special education teachers, administrators, and parents can use the document to identify and support existing effective special education programs, services, practices, and policies, and to establish priorities and plans for improving existing programs or developing needed policies and programs.

4. Agencies and organizations can use the indicators as a resource for developing or refining professional and program standards.

5. Higher education faculty, staff-development coordinators, teachers, administrators, and parents can use the indicators in refining or developing pre-service and in-service personnel development plans and programs.

6. Local school boards can use the indicators for establishing district policies and for reviewing programs, processes, procedures, and outcomes.

7. Agencies and parent organizations can use the indicators in parent training curricula to provide an overview of the educational system for introductory parent training and for more in-depth training for parent specialists.

8. Private school organizations can use the indicators to identify indicators of effective private school programs that could be used by their associated schools.

Conclusion

Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education is intended to serve as a resource for all concerned groups in their efforts to move beyond compliance to focus on the effectiveness of regular education, special education, and related services for students with disabilities. Their combined efforts have generated much significant progress to date and can continue to provide a major impetus for program refinement and development.

DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY OF THE DOCUMENT

Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education: A Reference Tool (First Edition) represents a milestone in the history of the Regional Resource Center (RRC) program. It is the result of a cooperative national effort of many people that was facilitated through the regional structure of the RRC program.

The RRC program is funded by the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs to assist state and local education agencies in developing quality programs and services for handicapped children by:

- working with them to identify and analyze persisting problems;
- linking them with the most recent developments in special education research, technology, and practices;
- linking them with states experiencing similar problems and providing the opportunity for and assistance in developing solutions for common problems;
- helping them adopt new technologies and practices; and
- working with them to improve the cooperation between professionals and parents of handicapped children.

In the Spring and Summer of 1985, the six RRCs conducted needs assessments in all fifty-eight (58) State Education Agencies (SEAs). Thirty-five of the SEAs, or 61%, identified program evaluation as a persisting problem. When state needs were collapsed to regional priorities, four of the six RRC regions listed one or more program evaluation issues as regional priorities.

The Mid-South RRC convened representatives of these four RRCs as a task force to plan a joint response to the apparent need for ways programs can judge their own effectiveness. Additional advice was sought from the other two RRCs, the Research Committee of the Council of Administrators of Special Education and from some private firms that were working with state education agencies on program evaluation.

It became clear that a great deal of redundant activity was occurring as state and local agencies sought to locate extant indicators of effectiveness in special education through library searches and phone calls across the country. The task force proposed that a document be developed that could serve as a reference tool to such local and state efforts. The task force further proposed that the document be developed with the direct involvement of a broad-based panel of representative stakeholders in order to ensure that the results would be useful. Initial concerns about having "National Indicators" were set aside when the effort was defined as a reference tool from which stakeholder groups would draw information for use in their own locales.

A first step involved locating research articles and state documents. Because the SEA documents were not readily available in the literature, each RRC agreed to contact its constituent SEAs and provide documents that would meet the following criteria:

1. Represent a local or state special education perspective;

2. Be available in the public domain or be released for use by the RRC program;

3. Represent the most current information from the source;

4. Refer to "effectiveness" or "quality" i.e., not compliance; and

5. Provide a basis for judging effectiveness and quality.

Eight types of items were considered for inclusion in the compilation; "standard," "criteria," "goals," "objectives," "indicators," "documentation" or "evidence," "evaluation variables," and "evaluation questions." Materials from 13 states (many of which were in draft form) were obtained through this process. The Mid-South RRC prepared a simple compilation of these and other documents, e.g., some initial studies, for discussion by the panel.

A representative panel was formed in February of 1986, and task force and panel activities were merged. Panel membership had been designed to ensure the participation of representatives of: parents of children and youth with handicaps; Special education administrators in local education agencies (LEAs); Special education administrators in SEAs; Chief State School Officers, and the participating RRCs. In March, two teachers were added to the panel and the South Atlantic RRC sent a representative.

The panel members were asked to perform three functions:

1. To participate in face-to-face interactions that would ensure that the development of a reference document would address primary needs and would be appropriately linked to relevant events, people, and contexts;

2. To share drafts of the proposed document with colleagues to ensure broad-based input to the final product; and

3. To assist with the dissemination of the document in the future by creating awareness of it and its potential uses.

While the panel was being formed, the Mid-South RRC distributed a request for proposal to individuals and agencies that might assist the Mid-South RRC in developing the reference tool. The responsibilities of the subcontractor included facilitating the meetings and integrating panel input with available research on effectiveness. The subcontract was awarded to the Center for Resource Management (CRM) in New Hampshire based on its prior work with the New Hampshire SEA and the availability of its data base on the effectiveness research.

Over a five month period, commencing on March 5, 1986, members of the National RRC Panel collaborated to produce a comprehensive reference document identifying what current and past practice and research suggests are the types of outcomes, approaches, and conditions that characterize an effective special education program. An effective special education program is broadly defined here as one that is characterized by an equitable, positive and successful school experience for students with disabilities and one that leads to equal access to society and a productive lifestyle.

The efforts of the Panel involved three face-to-face work sessions, individual review and editing, and telephone conferences to share ideas and reaction and to achieve consensus on the framework, content, and format of the document. Panel members' work together was guided by several principles and collaborative decisions. These included agreement that:

- The document would be written from the perspective of equal educational opportunity for all students – all children receive the same education, unless their needs require alternative approaches.

- The National Panel effort and the Chief State School Officers' effort to specify effectiveness indicators would be compatible to the extent possible as a way of strengthening communication between regular and special educators on program improvement efforts.

- The document would emphasize effectiveness, not compliance. However, items associated with compliance would be included if they also had implications for effectiveness.

- Themes of major import to the special education field, such as least restrictive environment and parent participation would be highlighted.

In developing the document, the National RRC Panel had to address issues arising from differences among document sources in definition of terms, and variations in quality and specificity. Terms to be used throughout the document were defined, and to the extent possible statements were framed in a consistent format. However, because of the range of differences found in sources, considerable variation had to be accepted in the level of specificity across indicator statements included in the document so that the original intent or meaning of statements would not be lost through editing. Panel members deleted statements of questionable quality.

The initial data base was condensed by CRM to a first draft document for Panel review and editing with the intent of reducing redundancy within categories and creating consistency across categories with respect to the major concepts reflected in the data sources. The first draft document was reviewed/edited by Panel members and subsequently revised to incorporate their recommendations as well as reaction from several external reviewers. A similar process occurred with the second draft before all sections of the document were finalized.

Producing a document that would lead to a better understanding of the many interrelated practices and conditions associated with effective special education programming proved to be a complex challenge for the Panel. In responding to this challenge, Panel members brought varying perspectives and experiences to the task, while sharing a common commitment to equal educational opportunity for students with disabilities. One Panel member reflected her experience with the process in this way: "As we struggled together, we learned together." The exchanges and insights that resulted from the interactions of Panel members influenced many aspects of the document's development, and helped ensure that the viewpoints of different constituencies who might use or be affected by the document were considered.

The document you now hold is still emerging. Thus, it is called the "First Edition" to signify that it is intended as a dynamic tool. Revisions will be made as the Panel learns more about what does and doesn't work in special education.

Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education is presented as a tool to be used at state and local levels. Therefore, it has no copyright. Initial copies were distributed free to a number of organizations in 3-ring notebooks using a high quality reproduction process.

8. APPENDIX
BIBLIOGRAPHY
AND
LIST OF OTHER SOURCES

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Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education: A Reference Tool has been prepared as a "First Edition" without a formal field test although extensive reviews were conducted. The National RRC Panel elected to distribute the document in its present form and request three levels of feedback from users:

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